

THE RHINEBECK PLAN



TOWN OF RHINEBECK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, New York DECEMBER, 2009



Cover photograph: The last remaining dairy farm in Rhinebeck is the most-photographed property by participants in the June 22, 2003 Visioning Session photo survey. Active farming, open space and long views of the Catskill Mountain range are priority community values expressed by Rhinebeck residents throughout the planning process.

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TOWN OF RHINEBECK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Rhinebeck Plan

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Introduction

The Town of Rhinebeck has a rich historical and cultural past spanning over 300 years of European settlement and several thousand years of pre-historic habitation by Native Americans. Much of Rhinebeck's unique legacy is recognized in two large historic districts and many scattered historic sites throughout the town. The town is home to a portion of a National Historic Landmark District, the State Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District, the Estates District Scenic Area of Statewide Significance, State Scenic Byways, and a Coastal Zone area. It is also within the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and the state's Hudson River Valley Greenway, to name just a few of the designations that have recognized the town's exceptional natural and cultural characteristics.

Today, Rhinebeck's ongoing commitment to planning, natural resource protection and historic preservation, as well as its excellent quality of life, has made it an attractive community for those who seek a place with these attributes. While Rhinebeck's population declined in the 1990's due to the closure of IBM Kingston, between 2000 and 2003, the population of the town (excluding the Village) surged, increasing 6.8 percent – almost double Dutchess County's rate of growth for this same period. This rate of change is significant because Dutchess County is one of the fastest growing counties in New York State.

The following chapters will describe the town's demographics, existing land uses, housing resources, transportation infrastructure, natural resources, scenic resources, agricultural and open space resources, historic and cultural resources, community facilities, infrastructure, economic development strategies, and technological resources. Appendix 7 of this document is a summary of other planning documents that have the potential to affect Rhinebeck, but that have been prepared by other state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The community values described throughout this document demonstrate that town residents are both interested and concerned about Rhinebeck's natural and cultural heritage. The Rhinebeck Plan has addressed this concern through the identification and continuing attempts to preserve the town's historic and pre-historic resources and special environmental features, in light of increasing growth and development pressures.

THE NEED FOR A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Rhinebeck Plan is a guide for the town's immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, and development. It is designed to reinforce Rhinebeck as a rural community. More than a thousand residents helped the Comprehensive Plan Committee outline a vision to accomplish this. Adoption of the Plan means that all land use regulations must be enacted in accordance with The Rhinebeck Plan. Other government agencies must also consider Rhinebeck's vision in devising their plans for capital projects.

The Rhinebeck Plan was prepared during a multi-year planning process, initiated after the Town Board recognized there were development trends occurring in the Hudson Valley for which the town was not prepared (see Appendix 1 for a complete discussion of the process through which this Plan and zoning to implement this Plan have been developed). The prior town of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1989; consequently, much of its background information, especially the socio-economic data, was over 20 years old. Community values were based upon a 1985 public opinion survey. New York State's Legislative Commission on Rural Resources prepared, and the New York State Legislature enacted, sweeping changes to the planning and zoning enabling acts in the 1990's. Regional trends are affecting the way Rhinebeck has been growing.

"Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a town government is the authority and responsibility to undertake town comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens."
New York State Town Law § 272-a

Population Growth

Historically, the town's population has increased at a high rate – up to 25 percent per decade, from the 1950's to the 1980's. The population growth rate in the Town of Rhinebeck was higher than the rate in both the Village of Rhinebeck and Dutchess County during these years. This rate of increase slowed during the 1980's and 1990's and following a recessionary period, IBM-Kingston closed in the early 1990's, and many residents left the area. Rhinebeck's "big-box" retail store closed and population declined between 1990 and 2000. During this same time, however, the population in the Village of Rhinebeck increased by 12.9 percent and the Dutchess County population increased by 8.0 percent. Beginning in 2000, the Town of Rhinebeck once again began to grow as the population between 2000 and 2003 increased by 6.8 percent compared to the 1.2 percent and 3.8 percent in the Village and County, respectively.

Second home development has also accelerated due to the attractiveness of the community to urban dwellers. A June 26, 2004 New York Post article refers to Rhinebeck and Red Hook as "The Next Hampton." Wealthy individuals from the New York metropolitan area have been increasingly investing in land – primarily second homes. Telecommuting and the internet have allowed others the freedom to work from more remote locations, such as Rhinebeck. This largely rural town has also become attractive to those seeking privacy and a safe refuge from city life, particularly after the events of September 11, 2001. These and many other factors are changing the town's landscape in new and unpredictable ways. If present trends continue under Rhinebeck's

current plan and land use controls, until the town is essentially built-out, the community will no longer be recognizable as a rural community and much of the distinct character of Rhinebeck would be lost.

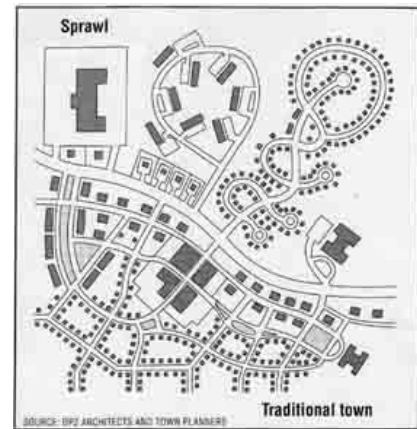
A rural community¹ is defined by the New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources as a community with a population density below 150 persons per square mile. As of 2003, the Town of Rhinebeck was reported to have a population density of 144 persons per square mile. When compared to the overall County population density of 363 persons per square mile or the Town of Hyde Park at 570 persons (located to the south of Rhinebeck), the general trend of south to north population growth becomes apparent. In many instances, the population growth in southern Dutchess County has been accompanied by the negative effects of suburban sprawl which largely results from uncontrolled or poorly controlled growth and land development. In general, suburban sprawl results in a diminishment of an area's unique character. The Town of Rhinebeck's desire to preserve its rural character, plan for its population, and prevent the negative impacts of suburban sprawl is a major component of the Rhinebeck Plan. The Town of Rhinebeck defines "rural" as "A landscape where the predominant feature is the natural environment, such as open space, farmland, woodlands and water bodies, and where development intrusion is minimal."

The Impacts of Suburban Sprawl

We all love our cars and the ease of movement they offer, but we have let them literally drive the design of our community; auto dependency is embedded into the town's 1989 Plan and Zoning Law. Auto dependency, both here in Rhinebeck and elsewhere throughout the nation, has created a rash of problems most commonly referred to as "suburban sprawl." Sprawl, simply put, is a land use pattern formed as a result of post-World War II zoning that separates uses and relies on large lot sizes in an attempt to protect community character and minimize impacts to community services. However, communities have found that sprawl ends up doing almost exactly the opposite and has also created unanticipated impacts to public health. Consider that the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now calling attention to the problem of sprawl and has found that:

- ❑ Obesity is a public health epidemic and is considered the nation's fastest rising public health problem, especially in children, and the CDC has pointed to our built environment and transportation infrastructure as one of the root causes of this epidemic
- ❑ Today's youngest generation may be the first in history who will not live as long as their parents

Cars represent freedom...but how free are you when you have to drive everywhere?



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Suburbanites who spend long hours in the car have higher rates of high blood pressure, arthritis, and breathing difficulties and weigh six pounds more than their urban counterparts who walk more each day
- ❑ American adults are nearly 25 pounds heavier and roughly an inch taller than they were in 1960
- ❑ Average ten year-olds weighed about 11 pounds more in 1999-2002 than they did 40 years ago
- ❑ The number of trips people take on foot has dropped by 42 % in the last 20 years
- ❑ In the 1970's, 70 % of youngsters walked or rode their bikes to school, whereas today only 14% do

Sprawl development results in many other negative impacts. For example, between 1960 and 1985, the New York City metropolitan area expanded its land area by over 65%, while the regional population in this same area grew by only 8%. Sprawl is a nationwide concern not only because of our dependence on cars for transportation, but because of its many other hidden impacts. These include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Higher costs to build and serve infrastructure and its accompanying tax burdens
- ✓ Loss of important open space, wetlands, biodiversity and agricultural and forested lands
- ✓ Greater use of non-renewable resources
- ✓ Higher rates of driving and vehicle ownership, cars driven longer distances per person, traffic congestion together with air and water quality degradation, greater family expenditures for additional vehicles, greater risk of fatal crashes and depressed rates of walking, biking or taking transit to work
- ✓ Increased disruption and fragmentation of wildlife habitats
- ✓ Increased impervious surfaces and resulting water quality impacts

In communities throughout the Hudson Valley and across the nation, there is a growing concern that development patterns dominated by sprawl are no longer in the long-term interests of our cities, suburbs, villages, rural or undeveloped areas. While communities are generally supportive of new development, many are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in existing settled areas or using it less efficiently than it could be, only to build new infrastructure further out in rural areas. According to an article published by the US Department of Energy's Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development, "Sprawl has been a dominant growth practice partly because it appears to be cheap. Land outside of city centers is less expensive than land in downtown areas. And yet infrastructure costs, the costs of new facilities, and the cost of public services are often higher for sprawl. A major problem is that homebuyers or developers do not pay all of these costs."

The cost of providing infrastructure and municipal services is higher with sprawl. Studies in California and Florida have shown these extra costs to be on the order of \$20,000 per residential unit. Similarly, a study by Rutgers University comparing sprawl development in New Jersey with a more compact infill development found a differential of about \$25,000 more per residence in the sprawl development. According to the American Farmland Trust, residential development returns to the community -\$0.25 for each dollar spent for services while farms, forests and open space return +\$0.49 per dollar spent for services.

Housing

Housing has also been affected by the rapidly expanding population in the Town of Rhinebeck and Dutchess County as a whole. According to the Mid-Hudson Multiple Listing Service, sale prices of homes in Dutchess County continue to climb. The median single-family home price in July 2005 was \$340,000, up from \$300,000 in September 2004 – a 13 percent increase in just nine months. In October 2003, the median home price was \$275,000, representing a nearly 24 percent increase in less than two years. The rental housing market has been similarly affected. In 2005, a Dutchess County worker needed to earn \$19.19 per hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the fair market rate of \$998 per month. The implications of this on residents' ability to afford housing have been dramatic.

Developing a Vision

Planning succeeds when residents reach consensus on their desires for future conservation and development. A vision statement is the formal expression of that community consensus. The vision statement sets the overall policy direction for the Comprehensive Plan. It answers the question “What do we want the Town of Rhinebeck to be?”, and in so doing, sets the stage for defining how we get there.

Influenced by extraordinary community input, our unprecedented place in the nation's history, our historic architectural treasures, unique sense of place, and our irreplaceable rural, natural and environmental quality of life, the Rhinebeck Vision Statement was developed. Our vision for the town's future is based on three guiding principles embracing community character, residential and business development and community services.

VISION STATEMENT

Community Character: Our guiding principle is that Rhinebeck is an exceptional place because of its desirable rural attributes, outstanding scenic, natural and historic resources, and thriving village and hamlet centers.

Residential and Business Development: Our guiding principle is that Rhinebeck is defined by a pattern of sparsely settled rural lands, and compact village and hamlet centers comprising houses placed close together and small, independent businesses that serve local needs.

Community Services: Our guiding principle is that Rhinebeck is enriched by its excellent schools, hospital and medical services, libraries and myriad other social, recreational and cultural services – all of which contribute to a strong sense of community.

In addition to Rhinebeck's commitment, as demonstrated throughout the Plan, we will reinforce these guiding principles, committed to working cooperatively with other municipalities on all issues, transcending political boundaries for the common good. We

will participate in helping to shape the plans and decisions of other government agencies that may affect the community.

To address the trends discussed above and other apparent trends seen throughout the town, The Rhinebeck Plan outlines residents' overall vision for future conservation and development of the town. Rhinebeck's vision emerged through a multi-year planning effort that included: eleven visioning sessions in the community; more than 200 Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan Committee and Subcommittee meetings; forums on open space, affordable housing, the special features of Rhinecliff, the build-out analysis and its fiscal implications, and traditional neighborhood development; workshops with the Pace University Land Use Law Center staff, Northern Dutchess Alliance, the Conservation Advisory Council, Village Zoning Commission and town officials; an Internet Web site, where all Plan documents were posted, and issues could be discussed in an electronic forum; bi-weekly newspaper feature columns; a public opinion survey which garnered better than a 20 percent response rate; plan involvement by school children through classroom activities; and community outreach efforts of the diverse Comprehensive Plan Committee.

The vision expressed in The Rhinebeck Plan serves as a statement of goals toward which town programs and activities should be directed. These goals have been translated into short-term steps or objectives which achieve one or more of the goals. Objectives progress the town toward a goal and provide a means of measuring success in meeting goals and realizing the vision. Recommended actions the town government and others can take were developed for each of the objectives and these actions answer the question "How do we get there?" The actions involve adoption of specific strategies and policies, such as zoning laws and regulations, which are needed to guide the town toward fulfillment of its vision.

The goals and objectives in the 1989 *Town of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan* were reviewed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to determine whether they are still valid today. They were refined and supplemented, and some were eliminated, to respond to the community values, background studies and the vision statement. The goals, objectives and actions needed to implement the community's vision can be found after the Vision Statement.

A municipality's ability to use its powers to implement the vision stems from the New York State Constitution. Article XIV Section 4 of the Constitution states:

NY State Constitution, Article XIV:

The policy of the state shall be to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products. The legislature, in implementing this policy, shall include adequate provision for the abatement of air and water pollution and of excessive and unnecessary noise, the protection of agricultural lands, wetlands and shorelines, and the development and regulation of water resources.

RHINEBECK'S APPROACH TO PLANNING

A plan is like a road map showing the routes we need to take to reach our goals, and we can refer to this map to tell us where we are at the moment and how we are progressing. When planning is done right, the results will be enjoyed by residents for 100 years or more; but when done poorly, negative consequences will last just as long! Even small decisions can have remarkable results, as can be seen along Route 9W in Ulster County and Route 9 in Southern Dutchess County. Lot-by-lot subdivisions and site plans, too, will reap the rewards of considered planning and suffer the consequences of the opposite; whatever decision is made, people will praise or lament it for as much as a millennium, and our children and grandchildren will be forced to live with the consequences.

"Across the country, when people were asked where they would prefer to live, work, shop, and recreate, they invariably select communities or neighborhoods that have an abundance of trees, open spaces, and uncluttered pedestrian ways. These preferences translate into clear economic terms: if a community is to succeed in attracting new residents and businesses, it must be concerned about its appearance, physical character, livability, and 'feel'."

President's Commission on
Americans Outdoors.

Municipal development decisions are made one-at-a-time over the years and by themselves, may seem innocuous enough. But when those decisions are viewed cumulatively, like the way they would for someone who leaves the community and returns after a period of years, the landscape can be altered in profound ways.

The Rhinebeck Plan has taken a long view at how development decisions are made. The Rhinebeck Plan has also examined the tools that are available for town decision-makers, has actively sought the viewpoints of residents and experts in the field, and then has chosen the most appropriate tools to incorporate into the Plan.

Developing a Build-Out Analysis

One of the first steps in the planning process was preparation of a "build-out analysis." The analysis estimated the impact of cumulative growth upon the town's land areas once all the developable land has been consumed and converted to uses permitted under current regulations. A build-out analysis is a tool designed to assist residents and decision-makers in understanding, ahead of time, the impacts that development may have on the community. It identifies public services that need to be built, expanded or improved to accommodate growth, and can help town officials estimate the costs and revenues required by local government to meet changing needs. It also helps to identify resource constraints (fiscal or environmental) that may impede new development. A build-out analysis helps in the selection of policy alternatives to accommodate or mitigate new development that will occur. It can also foster identification of appropriate land uses and the density of land use in the community.

A build-out analysis is designed to assess development-taking place at one point in time and space. It is not a prediction, *per se*, of what will occur at any particular time. For policy-makers however, it can show the consequences of taking no action to change the town's land use controls.

The “prescription” for land use development currently written into the Zoning Law emerged from the build-out analysis (see Appendix 2). It proved that if nothing is done to change the town’s Zoning and other regulations, eventually Rhinebeck could look like a typical suburban community, with some 187,757 square feet of additional commercial development spread out mainly along Routes 9 and 9G in a sprawling, auto-dependent manner. All residentially-zoned vacant lands, which can be developed with single family houses, will be developed, with an additional 3,408 one, three, and five-acre lots spread throughout the landscape. This pattern of development, known as sprawl, will result in low-density residential subdivisions providing a poor mix of homes, jobs and services. Activity centers will be limited to the village and the Route 9/9G strip, and there will be limited options for safe walking and biking (except in the village and hamlet). At current rates of growth, the town’s undeveloped lands will be entirely developed in a matter of years.

Build-out Summary

In 2003, the Town of Rhinebeck had a population of 5,004; however, by build-out, the population would jump to 14,785 – almost triple what it is today! The 9,781 additional residents, including 1,528 school children, would require ten new paid police officers and ten paid fire fighters, new town facilities and more classrooms and other space to accommodate the additional school children. More than 3,400 additional septic disposal systems, generating about 1.6 million gallons of sewage per day discharged to the ground would be needed, considering residential needs, and the additional dwellings would add more than 3,400 new groundwater wells. There would be more than 1,486 acres of impervious surfaces, like roads, driveways, and structures (7% of the town’s remaining undeveloped land area). Projected vehicle trips in the town, estimated to be more than 34,000 additional trips per day by an additional 6,800 vehicles on the roads, would be made to or through the village, on Route 308, Route 9, Route 9G and other roads.

As discussed in the Rhinebeck Plan, Rhinebeck has a multitude of sensitive environmental and historic resources that, if lost to or significantly affected by development, would forever change Rhinebeck as a community nationally recognized for its historic and natural resources. One of the town’s most significant industries, tourism, would suffer irreparable harm if Rhinebeck lost the charms that attract people here.

The build-out analysis only examined what would happen if the town were built out with single-family homes. However, Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and Planned Residential Developments (PRD), which are currently encouraged in the Zoning Law, could create large-scale developments almost anywhere in Rhinebeck. Under current zoning, density bonuses are available to developers who construct central water and sewer facilities for new subdivisions, who build PRDs, or construct other specific types of permitted development. Because PRDs and PUDs were not incorporated into the build-out analysis, the analysis understates the amount and scale of new development that would be permissible under current zoning.

There are an endless variety of possible scenarios that could be analyzed for the build-out analysis, given the many existing tools in the Zoning Law potentially available to a developer. Engaging in an alternative build-out analysis of the existing zoning tools would produce an encyclopedic document, but its usefulness would be limited because of

the speculative nature of those analyses. It is far more important to concentrate on the policy implications of the current Zoning Law and to develop a plan for altering the current regulations to be more in line with the policies developed in The Rhinebeck Plan

Identifying Priority Growth Areas

Residents, through the public participation and visioning process described in Chapter 2 and Appendix 1, clearly articulated their disdain for the possibilities which prescribe suburban sprawl. The Committee, in response, looked at available alternatives to accommodate development in a more responsive and responsible way. **The most promising vision is one where new growth in the town occurs in designated locations (called “priority growth areas”), just like the village’s and hamlet’s traditional 19th Century compact development pattern, coupled with a continuation of the dominant pattern of sparsely settled rural and agricultural lands in the remainder of the town.** As discussed in Chapter 5, a number of priority growth areas throughout the Town were identified to accommodate growth and the affordable housing needs of the Town. These areas were selected for a variety of reasons. The most important criteria included:

- ❑ Strengthening existing centers
- ❑ Proximity to already developed areas
- ❑ Serving the new development in a pedestrian-oriented manner
- ❑ Lack of significant environmental constraints
- ❑ Potential to preserve important farmland and other open space
- ❑ Adequate highway infrastructure
- ❑ Access to public transportation
- ❑ Access to existing water and sewer services that can be extended or improved to serve the new development, or to address an existing deficiency.

Addressing Sprawl in Rhinebeck

Here in Rhinebeck, the build out analysis looked at the impacts, including fiscal, of conventional suburban (or sprawl type) development patterns (as prescribed by the Zoning Law), contrasted with planned conservation development that focuses new development in the priority growth areas. Furthermore, planned conservation development that occurs in the priority growth areas would be carefully planned and well designed to preserve Rhinebeck’s character. The analysis found the following results would occur under conventional suburban development (CSD) and planned conservation development scenarios, compared with current development in the town:

Conventional Suburban Development (CSD) compared with Planned Conservation Development				
	Dwellings	Population	Population Density	Fiscal Costs
Current Development	1,416 in 2000	4,063 in 2000	120 persons per sq. mi. in 2000	Current Town Budget
Sprawl (CSD) Build-out under Current Zoning	3,408 Additional	9,781 Additional	410 persons per sq. mi.	-\$932,557
Planned Conservation Development	1,409 Additional	4,044 Additional	239 persons per sq. mi.	+\$1,657,079

To implement the vision expressed by residents, The Rhinebeck Plan is based upon a well-established planning principle: it is better to proactively manage growth rather than allow uncontrolled growth. **Residents may think they are protected from uncontrolled growth because of our current Zoning Law, but this document is a recipe for sprawl. It designates nearly every unbuilt parcel for eventual development, and each parcel would eventually need to be provided with services, would generate school children, would increase stormwater runoff, and add additional vehicles on our roads, would require sanitary waste disposal in the same places that water is drawn, would change the landscape forever, would move the town from being rural to suburban, would cause a spiraling of tax increases, and would eliminate agriculture and other open space uses.** As each parcel develops, there would be consequences – some subtle and some not – which affect our economic vitality, environmental resources, social fabric and quality of life.

Since the early 1960's, when rapid growth changed many communities forever, planners have talked about ways to manage or influence the rate, amount, or geographic pattern of growth within communities. Planners lacked the tools to manage growth wisely in the 1960's; but with several decades of experience growth management has been refined and is now referred to as "Smart Growth." Essentially, smart growth is development that serves the economy, community, and the environment. If growth management is to be effective, it must address all three sectors.

A divergent coalition of 32 organizations called the Smart Growth Network has come together to support smart growth by adopting a set of ten principles. The coalition represents the interests of organizations as diverse as the National Association of Home Builders, American Planning Association, Institute of Transportation Engineers, National Association of Realtors, National Wildlife Federation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Natural Resources Defense Council. Even government and government organizations like the US Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the State of Maryland, the National Association of Counties, United States Conference of Mayors and Local Government Commission have agreed upon and adopted the ten smart growth principles.

What is Smart Growth? The Smart Growth Network defines smart growth² as:

Development that serves the economy, community and the environment. It provides a framework for communities to make informed decisions about how and where they grow. Smart growth makes it possible for communities to grow in ways that support economic development and jobs; create strong neighborhoods with a range of housing, commercial, and transportation options; and achieve healthy communities that provide families with a clean environment. In so doing, smart growth provides a solution to the concerns facing many communities about the impacts of the highly dispersed development patterns characteristic of the past 50 years. Though supportive of growth, communities are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city and rebuilding it farther out. They are questioning the necessity of spending increasing time in cars locked in traffic and traveling miles to the nearest store. They are questioning the practice of abandoning brownfields in older communities while developing open space and prime agricultural land and thereby damaging our environment at the suburban fringe. As these quality-of-life issues become increasingly important for American communities, local and state policymakers, planners, developers, and others are turning to smart growth as one solution to these challenges.

The Smart Growth Network's ten principles articulate the goals of smart growth. The principles help communities recognize and value what smart growth is and help them identify ways to implement it. **The Rhinebeck Plan adopts the following ten principles** and recognizes that the actions recommended in this Plan will be needed to put them into practice:

Smart Growth Principles

- 1) Mix land uses
- 2) Take advantage of compact building design
- 3) Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- 4) Create walkable neighborhoods
- 5) Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- 6) Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- 7) Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- 8) Provide a variety of transportation choices
- 9) Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- 10) Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Putting the smart growth principles fully into action requires changes in the way the community functions. It requires that the town and village governments, community groups, local boards, developers, transit providers, other government agencies, landowners and residents, and others agree to the new way of doing business. This shift, however, will be eased by the recommended process described in The Rhinebeck Plan, which clearly illustrates the myriad economic, community, and environmental benefits gained from a smart growth approach. Regardless of his or her role in the development process, each of the individuals involved in shaping how and where Rhinebeck grows stands to benefit from the improved quality of life that smart growth can provide.

Rhinebeck's current Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations were subjected to a "Smart Growth Audit" as recommended by the American Planning Association. The results can be found in Appendix 3. The Audit is intended to help decision makers select the planning tools needed to implement a smart growth strategy.

THE BENEFITS OF RHINEBECK'S APPROACH

There are definite benefits to be gained by the adoption and implementation of The Rhinebeck Plan. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Economic Benefits: Studies overwhelmingly show that real estate values remain stable in communities with high quality open spaces, protected scenic viewsheds and intact historic resources. In fact, protected open space, beautiful views and remnants of our collective history increase the attractiveness and value of adjacent properties, which in turn increases the tax base. Preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas is one of the basic principles of smart growth because it attracts high quality residential and business development, which are then located in selected areas deemed most appropriate for the common good of the entire community. Cost-of-services (roads, plowing, police and fire protection and the like) are controlled. Our farmland and forested areas provide working landscapes that generate income for residents and tax revenues for town government. Historic properties are adaptively reused to remain economically viable. Employment opportunities can grow, and the vitality of the community is sustained.

Environmental Benefits: Conserving natural and cultural resources allow our biological diversity (biodiversity) to remain intact and our community to remain healthy. Preserved wetlands continue to filter out pollutants, prevent flooding, and protect our drinking water. Open vegetated farm fields and forested hills cleanse the air and absorb storm water runoff, which, in turn, reduces erosion and danger of flooding. The adverse effects of roads and the chemicals that wash off in rain and snow are reduced, and the harmony and balance of nature is more sustainable.

Community Benefits: The goals and success of preserving the rural, scenic, natural and historic character of the town can be measured in the number of farms saved and acres of wetlands preserved, but there are also community benefits that, while perhaps intangible, are just as powerful for residents. For many of us, seeing and experiencing the beauty and harmony of nature in our open spaces triggers a feeling of freedom and contentment, of living a decent and hopeful life. We develop pride of place, which causes us to change from being a resident to being a citizen, and then, by supporting a common cause, we join together and become a community. We feel we are part of a place in the world where our lives become more worthwhile and more meaningful.

The Rhinebeck Plan should become an essential part of town policy influencing the decisions of town officials, business owners and residents, and helping guide the decisions of other government agencies. Its implementation will instill and nurture a sense of stewardship for the gifts nature and time have bestowed upon our fortunate community.

Recommendation

The primary and most effective means of achieving the goals of The Rhinebeck Plan is swift implementation of the recommended changes to the town's land use controls.

Town and inter-municipal committees and boards must be given direction and/or established to carry forward the actions upon which protection of the rural, scenic, natural and historic character of the town is dependent.

P R E P A R I N G T H E P L A N

Planning is more than a tool or technique; it is a philosophy for organizing action that enables people to predict and visualize their future.

A comprehensive plan that reflects the collective vision of the community will become a document of public policy that can be supported and endorsed. Plans that are based on inaccurate assumptions of residents' values or are far removed from community desires have little chance of being implemented. The Comprehensive Plan Committee used innovative facilitation techniques and a widely distributed public opinion survey to involve town residents in the planning process. The public participation phase of the planning process was designed to articulate a collective vision for future conservation and development of the community. The report found in Appendix 1 analyzes the results of numerous community visioning sessions with residents and key stakeholders, with students, as well as the town-wide public opinion survey and a mini-survey developed by and administered to Chancellor Livingston Elementary students. The way that community values emerged and were translated to the "Vision Statement" are described herein.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee's extensive public participation process was the starting point for developing the goals, objectives, and actions contained in The Rhinebeck Plan. Open and effective public participation is essential to the success of this values-driven process. To ensure that residents have a central role in the development of the Plan, one of the first tasks of the Comprehensive Plan Committee was to develop a schedule for involving residents of the town in the planning process. With assistance from GREENPLAN, Inc., the Comprehensive Plan Committee conducted its own visioning session, two town-wide sessions were held, and then a series of neighborhood-based "mini" visioning sessions were held in Rhinecliff, Hillside, the Performing Arts Center and Wurtemberg. In addition, sessions were held with civic, non-profit and other community groups, and with realtors, retailers, developers, architects, and other professionals and business leaders in the town.

The Committee also worked with students in the community. Student representatives of Chancellor Livingston Elementary School met with the Committee to describe their vision of Rhinebeck and to report on a student-developed opinion survey to which fifth

graders responded. A mini-visioning session, with participating student representatives from all grades at Bulkeley Middle School and Rhinebeck High School, was held at the High School Library. Dates of the events can be found in the table in Appendix 1. The Committee distributed a public opinion survey to residents of the town. The Committee conducted forums on open space, affordable housing, the buildout analysis and its fiscal implications, traditional neighborhood development and the special features of Rhinecliff. The Committee and a group of volunteers prepared bi-weekly newspaper columns for the Gazette Advertiser, served other area news media with press releases and stories, and an Internet Web site kept residents informed of the Committee's activities. Planning documents and other information about the planning process were posted on the Web site for residents to view and download, and issues were discussed in an electronic forum. A more complete discussion of the process can be found in Appendix 1, the Community Values Report.

THE GOALS OF THE RHINEBECK PLAN

In developing The Rhinebeck Plan, a series of "visions," "objectives," and "actions" were identified to help achieve the Town's overall goals for the future. The purpose of the visions, objectives, and actions are described later in the Plan. In general, each of these are intended to help achieve the overall goals of the Town.

The Town's goals are as follows:

- ✓ Maintain the rural character of the Town by integrating development into existing hamlets and the Village in key locations and enhancing protection of community character through conservation design practices in the rural portions of the Town.
- ✓ Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the housing needs of a broad spectrum of community residents.
- ✓ Strive to achieve social, economic, and cultural diversity within the community.
- ✓ Preserve the Town's historic, cultural, scenic, and natural resources and the lands that surround those resources.
- ✓ Encourage agriculture and open space preservation as a means of maintaining the rural character and preserving operating farms and the economic viability of farming and forestry.
- ✓ Encourage economic development and tourism that is in keeping with the rural character of Rhinebeck and the centrality of the Village.

¹ The Structure, Functions and Financing of Local Government: Adapting to Modern Challenges, New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. "*The Commission on Rural Resources defines as rural those towns with population densities up to 150 persons per square mile.*" August 1991.

² Smart Growth Network and International City/County Management Association, *Getting to Smart Growth*, Washington, D.C., 2002.

Community Vision

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Rhinebeck Plan was developed through an extensive process including numerous public meetings held by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The ideas discussed at these meetings were ultimately used to guide development of the overall community vision. The results of the visioning process are described below and are followed by the vision statements developed for the plan.

The vision statements read together form the composite vision of how the Town of Rhinebeck wishes to move into the future and to protect the Town's community character. Each individual vision statement is supported by objectives and action items that are described in more detail in subsequent chapters of the Rhinebeck Plan.

VISIONING RESULTS

Visioning is a collaborative decision-making tool based on the principle that the most effective planning process is one that is inclusive. Participants are encouraged to imagine the ideal future of their community, without getting bogged down in details of making that vision a reality. The purpose of visioning is to help a community decide where it wants to "get to." Like Alice in Wonderland, if we don't have a clear idea of where we are going, we won't know which road to take. **Visioning helps to build consensus on goals and objectives, fosters community ownership in a plan, and permits residents to participate in determining the desired future of the community that is their home.**

Visioning can proceed in one of two ways – either by encouraging participants to "free think" without the encumbrance of any practical considerations, or by framing the conversation in the realities of the situation. The first method was used on June 7, 2003, to give participants complete freedom to "dream big" in order to encourage enthusiasm in the planning process and to gather a wide array of information about community objectives. The second method was used on June 22, 2003 and at all subsequent visioning sessions because organizers had already held the freethinking session, and wanted to focus the discussion on targeted issues as a next step. The results of the visioning sessions are illustrated in the following table:

Visioning Meeting Consensus

- ❑ Adopt innovative solutions to preserve open space and the rural landscape, and particularly farms; establish a town-based PDR program; use clustering and other smart growth techniques in outlying areas; channel new development and higher density into already developed areas through infill development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings; cooperate with the village in planning a smart growth strategy. Discourage sprawl.
- ❑ Prohibit franchise, big box, and formula businesses. As an alternative, create an economic development plan to proactively attract small-scale local businesses and other uses that serve local needs and maintain Rhinebeck's special character. Adopt design standards for new commercial development.
- ❑ Prevent strip development on Routes 9 and 9G. Instead, maintain the village as the commercial center; promote new development within easy walking distance of the village and hamlets; and create new shopping districts designed with village-like features such as sidewalks, street trees and other pedestrian amenities.
- ❑ Provide more affordable housing (rental and homeownership), so that the community retains its economic diversity and our children are able to live here in the future. Ensure that commercial space also remains affordable.
- ❑ Preserve gateways to the village and hamlet, and create/maintain greenbelts (distinct edges) around these settled areas to preserve the identities of the village and town.
- ❑ Preserve the town's historic character, as defined by historic buildings and features.
- ❑ Develop a better understanding of traffic conditions, regional transportation plans, and transportation alternatives.
- ❑ Connect the town and village with a network of walking and biking trails.
- ❑ Protect the riverfront, and improve the Rhinecliff public access area.
- ❑ Maintain a first class education system to accommodate the needs of a growing community.
- ❑ Protect water quality and water resources.
- ❑ Adopt signage and lighting standards to reduce visual clutter, enhance community character and reduce light pollution.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS

To supplement and support the visioning sessions, the Committee further enhanced the public participation process by gauging public opinion through survey research techniques. In the fall and winter of 2003 and 2004, the Plan Committee developed and administered a public opinion survey to determine residents' viewpoints on conservation and development in Rhinebeck. The survey was mailed to approximately 3,500 landowners in November of 2003, and approximately 300 additional surveys were distributed at Town Hall, the libraries and churches, and were delivered to multi-family development tenants. Additional copies of the survey were available to download from the Internet, but only a handful of persons chose to use this version.

A total of 764 surveys were returned, for a response rate of more than 20 percent. Survey sampling error is ± 3 percent, indicating that the responses were precise. The outstanding response indicates the interest Rhinebeck residents take in planning for their town's future. The results of the survey were compiled and presented at a community meeting at Town Hall on August 10, 2004.

The public participation process was based on the premise that when planning begins with a lively exchange of information and ideas, it will result in effective actions with broad support. Every effort was made to ensure maximum participation from the community in the survey stage of the planning process. The survey revealed a strong consensus among Rhinebeck residents. The vast majority of residents (in the ninetieth percentile) favored open space protection and the preservation of natural and scenic resources. Clear mandates emerged on most issues related to development. It is significant to note that 99 percent of the respondents rated Rhinebeck's rural/small town atmosphere a major strength. On the other hand, only seven percent (7%) of the respondents believe that Rhinebeck would be better off if it were more suburban than rural. **This overwhelming belief about maintaining rural character by the town's full-time and part-time residents requires serious consideration by all town officials.** A majority of the respondents have lived in Rhinebeck more than 15 years and 34 percent have lived here more than 25 years. Only 11 percent considered themselves part-time residents. Thus, there was a good balance of long-time residents responding, with both newcomers and weekend residents also represented.

On the importance of protecting and managing community resources, three out of four respondents placed a high regard on environmental, cultural, and agricultural resources. Other community resources, such as the Northern Dutchess Hospital and libraries were also considered very important or important, but only slightly less so. The overall picture that emerges is of residents who enjoy the rural and historic character of the community, feel strongly about the village as the center of the community, and wish to have a say in the way development is occurring.

Residents by an overwhelming majority favor community resource protection, but they also wish to see the tax base expanded with limited new commercial growth that is developed in a small scale manner, serves local needs, is locally-owned and operated (i.e. no national franchises) and is managed in an environmentally sound manner.

Respondents also want to see home-based businesses encouraged. In addition, the great majority of residents favor maintaining open space in the town through restricting development and preserving Rhinebeck's natural beauty. Residents do not want to see additional strip development (92%), especially development that requires wider roads or more traffic lanes (83 %). Eighty-seven percent agree that big-box stores are not appropriate in Rhinebeck; 92 percent want to discourage commercial growth along roads, with growth instead guided to areas around the village and hamlets (96 %). New development should be village-like and pedestrian friendly (92%). It's clear that residents perceive the need for agriculture and forested lands to play an essential role in maintaining Rhinebeck's rural character. Ninety-two percent want to encourage agriculture, 87 percent want open space preserved in new development, and 93 percent think new development should maintain rural character. Sixty-eight percent favor using local taxes, as Red Hook has done, to preserve agriculture and open space.

A variety of housing for all income levels is favored by 75 percent and 70 percent think senior citizen housing should be encouraged. Ninety three percent agree that the town should take steps to preserve historic features and buildings, and that the unique characteristics of Rhinecliff should be taken into consideration for any new growth in that area. The role of tourism in our local economy was recognized by 84 percent of the respondents, and concern was expressed about development in surrounding communities, with 71 percent of the opinion expressed that we should work to influence the decisions of other towns when our quality of life may be affected.

Transportation, especially walking and bicycling, is clearly an important concern for residents, with 91 percent believing that town roads should be designed and maintained so that pedestrians and bicyclists can safely use them and 82 percent believing that the town should provide walking paths, bike and hiking trails. An overwhelming 97 percent believe that the village should remain pedestrian friendly with 80 percent of the opinion that public transit and pedestrian facilities should be included in all new development in the town.

Infrastructure was recognized as important to future development, with 71 percent of the opinion that the village and town should work together to expand water and sewer, and 91 percent agreeing that the town and village should share other services. Respondents (82%) also favor both municipalities working together with the School District to share recreational facilities and to encourage community use of the Fairgrounds (82%). Residents' opinions were not as solid on a number of other areas related to community services.

The number of years that respondents have lived in Rhinebeck was evenly distributed across all categories. While only 11 percent lived here for more than 50 years, the remainder was almost evenly split in the low twenty percentile for 0 to 5 years, six to 15 years, 16 to 25 years and 26 to 50 years. Respondents were heavily homeowners, with 94 percent in that category, and only four percent renters. This contrasts with the 2000 US Census data that shows there were 3,001 occupied housing units in Rhinebeck. Of those, 67.2 percent were owner- occupied (2,018 units) and 32.8 percent renter occupied (983

units). However, the Census data includes residents of the several nursing homes that are located in Rhinebeck, and represents this discrepancy.

For every three respondents to the survey, one in three works in the village or town of Rhinebeck, another one works elsewhere in Dutchess County, and the remaining one is either retired or works outside of Dutchess. Finally, thirty-two percent of the respondents characterize themselves as retired, and 57 percent work full-time, 10 percent part-time, and one percent not employed.

The public opinion survey, together with the visioning session results, allowed the Comprehensive Plan Committee to analyze and better understand both the problems and the potentials that exist in the town. The full results of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

Including extensive public participation in the planning process took longer and cost more than a process that lacks this feature. It can also raise expectations beyond what is finally delivered, since the goal of the process is to be inclusive to all who wish to have a say in it. **But effective citizen participation also builds support for community goals and in the long run, saves time and money because local decision-makers are assured that they are following the wishes of residents.**

Town officials have been presented with a clear mandate: Residents overwhelmingly like the town just the way it is, and are not interested in any growth that would not be considered “smart.” Residents place extraordinarily high value on the community and environmental resources that make Rhinebeck a special place to live, and will only tolerate new development if it respects and conserves those values. Residents understand the implications of failing to establish clear smart growth policies and ensuring their implementation.

Examples abound throughout the Hudson Valley of communities that have been unable or unwilling to shape change as it happens. For a smart growth strategy to succeed, residents must get ahead of change and ensure that when growth does occur, it does so in the way they want it to.

So how do the results of the visioning sessions and public opinion survey get us where we want to go? The results were used by the Committee to identify a collective “vision” for the Town of Rhinebeck that is summarized below and described in more detail in subsequent chapters of the Rhinebeck Plan. By clearly establishing a vision of Rhinebeck in the future, we set the stage for defining how we can see our vision become a reality.

THE RHINEBECK PLAN VISION STATEMENTS

Land Use

- Protect the rural, scenic, natural and historic character of the town
- Perpetuate the pattern of mixed uses and higher densities in the village of Rhinebeck and the hamlet of Rhinecliff, surrounded by low-density rural and residential uses
- Strive to retrofit existing, non-conforming commercial development over time, in order to respect Rhinebeck's small-town character and architectural heritage
- Collaborate with public and private entities and work regionally with other communities to preserve the unique characteristics and special features of the town.

Housing

- Strive to achieve social, economic and cultural diversity within the community
- When planning for a diverse array of housing types, strive to provide housing for Rhinebeck's first time homebuyers, seniors, and work force including retailers, school, hospital/health care, fire and law enforcement personnel and office workers, among others.
- Take into account the requirements of special, diverse populations when addressing housing needs of the community.
- Plan all residential development to be appropriately in keeping with Rhinebeck's unique, small-town character and its historic and architectural heritage.

Traffic and Transportation

- Ensure that all new development is pedestrian-friendly.

Natural Resources

- Conserve lands suitable and necessary for surface and groundwater re-charge, biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- Preserve and protect the Hudson River and its shore-lands, and provide and protect visual and physical access to them.

Agriculture and open space

- Conserve lands suitable and necessary for farming, agriculture and forestry.
- Preserve and protect open space and viewsheds, agricultural and forested lands and gateways, as Rhinebeck's housing stock is moderately expanded.

Scenic Resources

- Protect the scenic character of the community and its rural, natural, and historic elements.

Historic and Cultural Resources

- Preserve all specifically designated historic districts, buildings and features for the enjoyment of future generations
- Preserve the history and integrity of the hamlet of Rhinecliff and ensure that its strong civic and cultural life is maintained.

Community Facilities

- Continually explore opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation with Rhinebeck village for such community services as police, fire, roads, sewage disposal, refuse and water supply
- Work cooperatively to ensure that schools, libraries and other educational and cultural facilities and organizations are supported at the highest levels
- Maintain and enhance Rhinebeck as a center for increasingly diverse and wide-ranging recreational, civic and cultural activities
- Vision: Recognize the value of volunteerism in the community and encourage our citizens to take an active role in the future of Rhinebeck

Infrastructure

- Ensure that such elements of infrastructure as water, sewers and roads are built and maintained to be consistent with community ideals and values, as expressed in The Rhinebeck Plan.

Economic Development

- Ensure the viability of existing, locally owned businesses in Rhinebeck, and preserve and protect the village commercial center as a lively and active one.
- Encourage new businesses in the town that are built to human scale; provide employment for residents; and offer goods and services geared to their needs.
- Encourage tourism in Rhinebeck at a scale that respects the town's historic and rural character, making visitors feel welcome and respecting the primary needs of residents, year-round.

Rhinebeck Tomorrow

Implementation is the key to a successful comprehensive plan. Preparing and adopting The Rhinebeck Plan is not the end of the process. It is, in fact, just the beginning of a continuous planning effort. Its realization will benefit the town as a whole by raising the quality of life for all residents and making Rhinebeck a more attractive place for business and pleasure, alike.

The Rhinebeck Plan is the official statement of guiding principles for future conservation and development within the town. For all future development changes, The Plan should be the guide to be consulted for direction and management. Undertaking development that is consistent with the Plan moves the town closer to its preferred land use arrangement.

Before The Rhinebeck Plan can be adopted or amended, it must first be subject to public hearings, as well as review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Both the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Town Board are responsible for advertising in a newspaper of general circulation in the town and holding their own public hearings in the process. The Plan must follow the specific adoption procedures found in § 272-a of New York State Town Law. These include making the Plan document available to members of the public at the Town Clerk's office at least ten days prior to the public hearings. Other locations, such as the libraries, may also be used for public review of the document. Within 90 days after the Committee transmits its recommendations to the Town Board for Plan adoption, the Town Board must hold its own public hearing. The Town Board is responsible for conducting the SEQR review of the Plan, and must issue either a Negative Declaration or a Positive Declaration and Findings prior to adoption. The Town Board must also consider applicable county agricultural and farmland protection plans created under the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law.

The Town Board must provide a maximum time interval for review of the Plan after it is adopted. It is recommended that this Plan be reviewed at least every

three years. Future amendments can be accomplished by means of meeting minutes, resolutions, studies, reports and other descriptive materials that may be adopted as part of the town's overall Comprehensive Plan.

Once adopted, The Rhinebeck Plan must be filed in the office of the Town Clerk, and a copy must also be filed in the office of the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development. Copies of The Plan should be provided to the members of all boards and committees in the town and with the Highway Department. It is further recommended that copies of the Plan be filed with the village, all surrounding towns (including those in Ulster County), as well as with the other government agencies that were included in The Rhinebeck Plan review of their own plans, such as the New York State departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation, Dutchess County departments of Health and Public Works and the Water and Wastewater Authority and the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

The following pages contain a summary of the actions recommended in The Rhinebeck Plan and includes an assignment of responsibility for implementing them. For a full understanding of the implications of the recommended action, readers should consult the full text of the Plan. Those actions that should be completed as soon as possible are identified for immediate implementation. Other actions that should be implemented within one to two years of adoption of the Plan are identified for near-term implementation. Some actions are recommended for on-going implementation, and are identified as such.

The Rhinebeck Plan is a living document and should reflect the latest trends in smart growth initiatives, as well as those positive changes occurring within the Rhinebeck community. It is important that this Plan be implemented and used as recommended, and not put aside and forgotten. The integrity of the town's Zoning Law depends on it, since the Plan comprises the choices of Rhinebeck's citizenry about the way they want to live. Their commitment and level of participation earns them the right to expect the leadership of Rhinebeck to fulfill their obligations to implement The Rhinebeck Plan.

Town of Rhinebeck Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule

#	Task Description	Responsible Agency									Schedule			✓ Task Completed?
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend										On-going Implementation			
											Near Term			
											Immediate			
											Other Agency			
											Comprehensive Plan Committee¹			
											Conservation Advisory Council			
											Highway Department			
											Town Planner Town Engineer			
											Planning Board			
											Town Board			
Zoning Subcommittee: Comprehensive Plan Committee														
1.	Alter zoning densities to prevent a continuation of sprawl and to help preserve historic and rural character, open space and natural resources.	●	⊙								○			✓
2.	Prepare criteria and procedures for establishing priority growth areas that incorporate principles of conservation developments in specifically designated locations.	●	⊙								○			✓
3.	Mandate open space or conservation subdivision on all lands.	●	⊙								○			✓
4.	Expand the town’s commercial design guidelines to include all new development or redevelopment, including civic, institutional, large-scale residential and rural (non-farm) development.	●	⊙								○			
5.	Incorporate illustrative design standards into the Zoning Law.	●	⊙								○			✓
6.	Subject all new commercial and residential development that will be subject to site plan approval, or as a condition of Planning Board approval to the design standards.	●	⊙								○			✓
7.	Place limitations on the size of retail buildings to ensure they are at a scale that is in keeping with the community.	●	⊙								○			✓
8.	Allow adaptive re-use of historic structures to help preserve them by permitting multi-family housing, bed and breakfasts or tourist guesthouse operations.	●	⊙								○			✓

¹ Includes the Comprehensive Plan Committee’s Zoning Subcommittee

#	Task Description	Responsible Agency							Schedule			✓ Task Completed?
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend	Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	✓
9.	Create senior housing floating zone provisions in the Zoning Law and use stringent performance standards to guide the development of projects.	●	⊙				○					✓
10.	Guide new development to account for existing environmental constraints and existing and prospective municipal water and sewer.	●	⊙				○	●1 ●5				✓
11.	Provide design guidance, so that developers and architects can have clear criteria to be applied to Neighborhood developments.	●	⊙				○					✓
12.	Establish a smart growth initiative in the town by adopting sound planning principles.	●	⊙				○					✓
13.	Use the Smart Growth Network’s “Ten Principles of Smart Growth,” to create a wider range of housing choices, to use infrastructure more efficiently and cost-effectively and as a policy guide for sound planning.	●	⊙				○					✓
14.	Identify Priority Growth Areas in close proximity to the Village of Rhinebeck and existing hamlets to facilitate development of new walkable neighborhoods.	●	⊙				○					✓
15.	Consider developing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program in to facilitate transfer of development rights from rural areas into priority growth areas or between large land holdings.	●	⊙				○					✓
16.	Amend the Zoning Law and Map to create new Rural Residential districts outside of Priority Growth Areas within which overall residential density would be reduced.	●	⊙				○					✓
17.	Retain limited portions of the Town with 1-Acre zoning to recognize existing residential neighborhoods and to permit limited additional development of a similar scale in these areas.	●	⊙				○					✓
18.	Amend the Zoning Map to create a new Civic use (CIV) zone and two classifications of Land Conservation Districts as described in the Comprehensive Plan.	●	⊙				○					✓
19.	Amend the town’s non-residential Zoning districts, as shown on the proposed Zoning Map in the Comprehensive Plan and amend the Schedule of Use Regulations to eliminate potentially incompatible uses	●	⊙				○					✓

#	Task Description	Responsible Agency							Schedule			✓ Task Completed?
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend	Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
20.	Amend the Zoning Law and Map to create a new Rail Transportation Corridor District (RT) to recognize the importance of the freight and passenger rail corridor along the town’s westernmost boundary on the Hudson River and its potential for public trail linkages.	●	⊙				○					✓
21.	Amend the Zoning Law to make it clear there should be flexibility in lot sizes and the design of conservation subdivisions including both house lots and open space areas provided the open space is encumbered with conservation easements.	●	⊙				○					✓
22.	Allow for flexibility for all lots in conservation subdivisions so that minimum acreage is determined not only by well and septic system requirements but also with regard to protection of environmental resources and the preservation of the natural and scenic qualities of open lands.	●	⊙				○					✓
23.	Allow flexibility for flag lots and road frontage in conservation subdivisions to achieve the most appropriate use of open space and rural aesthetics on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The “four-step design process” described in Chapter 5 of the Plan should shape future subdivision design and development, not the numeric and other standards of the Zoning Law.	●	⊙				○					✓
24.	Allow flexibility in the ownership of open space areas (including private ownership shared by landowners in the subdivision), and other methods that would make it as uncomplicated as possible to advance conservation subdivision design and preserve open space.	●	⊙				○					✓
25.	Eliminate the Planned Residential Development District (PRD) and the Planned Unit Development District (PUD).	●	⊙				○					✓
26.	Mandate the Planning Board to use its authority to assess impacts of development projects bordering the Hudson River for their potential to provide visual and physical access.	●	⊙				○					✓
27.	Amend the Zoning Law to require all new development and re-development to comply with New York State’s stormwater requirements.	●	⊙				○					✓
28.	Maintain the dominant forest cover of the lands sloping toward the Hudson River during subdivision and/or other approvals by restricting development.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓

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		Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee ¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
29.	Amend the Zoning Law to require the placement of “Ag Notes” or “Forestry Notes” on subdivision plats, and as decided declarations in new residential lots.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
30.	Require the use of buffer strips on all lands subject to development or re-development when they are adjacent to existing farming or forestry operations.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
31.	Mandate the use of conservation subdivision for lands that contain important prime farmland and soils or mature forests.	●	⊙			⊙	○	⊙11				✓
32.	Prepare and adopt agriculture and forestry-friendly Zoning Law revisions that allow landowners to engage in commercial activities that provide flexibility in the use of their existing buildings and lands, generating additional income.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
33.	Encourage adaptive reuse of historic or unique farm buildings that merit special attention to help preserve them and encourage appropriate tourism, subject to performance standards.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
34.	Allow passive and non-motorized outdoor recreational use of farms and forests for a fee by special use permit.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
35.	Permit low- impact activities subject to performance standards through the special use permit process.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
36.	Encourage the use of existing silos as cell towers, and allow construction of cell towers disguised as silos and shelters as farm structures.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
37.	Require cell towers to be camouflaged as trees in forested areas or other creative designs compatible with the surrounding environment.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
38.	Encourage “pick-your-own” operations, road stands and farm markets, wineries, greenhouses, food processing facilities, inns, bed & breakfasts, and other low - impact endeavors.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
39.	Amend the Zoning Law to allow on-site retail sale of farm and wood products from the site and amend the Zoning to expand the provisions allowing these uses.	●	⊙				○	⊙11				✓
40.	Increase the current open space minimums that exist under the Residential Cluster Development Regulations, as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.	●	⊙				○					✓

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41.	Require the use of building envelopes on conservation subdivisions and set conditions on the maximum limits of disturbance on each lot.	●	⊙				○					✓
42.	Designate conservation subdivisions as a permitted use, and conventional subdivision as a special use permit in the Zoning Law.	●	⊙				○					✓
43.	Amend the cluster regulations in the Zoning Law to reflect the recommendations of Greenway Guide A1 on conservation (open space) subdivision design.	●	⊙				○					✓
44.	Amend the current methods for density yield calculation to exclude areas of wetlands, wetland buffers, floodplains, steep slopes over 25%, and stream corridors.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
45.	Amend the Zoning Law to require community septic disposal systems in new open space developments, subject to formation of a sewer district with management controlled by a responsible public entity.	●	⊙				○	●5				✓
46.	Amend the subdivision regulations to require all applicants for new subdivisions to submit electronic versions of their plans.	●	⊙				○					✓
47.	Expand the Planning Board’s responsibilities to include design reviews of new large-scale residential projects. Adopt clear design standards.	●	⊙				○					✓
48.	Develop standards for non-residential development that include scale, access and setbacks, signage, lighting, landscaping, pedestrian/bicycle circulation and others.	●	⊙				○					✓
49.	Re-visit the non-residential design guidelines to determine whether they are consistent with The Rhinebeck Plan. Revise the Guidelines, as appropriate.	●	⊙				○					✓
50.	Use the Greenway Guides D1 through D4 to revise the Zoning Law, and create design standards to address habitats, stream corridors, highways, and wellhead and aquifer protection.	●	⊙				○					✓
51.	Adopt a Cottage Housing Development Amendment to the Zoning Law that would allow compact housing densities for small houses in designated priority growth areas.	●	⊙				○					✓

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52.	Amend the Zoning Law to allow residential dwellings to be built in conjunction with commercial development, and require developers to set aside a percentage of any units built as affordable housing to residents earning less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income and also for residents earning between 50 and 80 percent of the Area Median Income.	●	⊙				○	○11				✓
53.	Require that the town’s design standards for non-residential development be considered in the approval process for all new commercial development and redevelopment.	●	⊙				○					✓
54.	Prepare criteria and design standards that would apply to all new development in the town.	●	⊙				○					✓
55.	Prepare design standards for new development which include, but are not limited to: protection of the natural and cultural features of a site; keeping buildings below on-site ridgelines or tree lines; use traditional building materials and traditional architectural styles and roof lines; use muted and earth-toned colors; maintain natural vegetation; preserve historic landscape features; site driveways unobtrusively; encourage use of stone walls rather than fences; and hide garages	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
56.	Enact protective regulations that restrict development on ridgelines, and other sensitive environmental features.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
57.	Update the town’s General Performance Standards to ensure they reflect state-of-the-art environmental impact thresholds for potential nuisances that have the potential to pollute the air, soil or water.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
58.	Examine and improve regulations in the Zoning Law concerning mining activities and amend the Zoning Law to further restrict such activities to existing, active mine sites. Prohibit the placement of new mine sites within the town.	●	⊙				○					✓
59.	Revise the acoustic performance standards in the Zoning Law to ensure that they are comprehensive and apply to a broad array of noise sources.	●	⊙				○					✓
60.	Ensure that the standards are specific to each noise type – i.e., that standards for short bursts of noise such as gun shots, for example, are unique and differ from the standards from such continuous noises as air conditioners, for example.	●	⊙				○					✓

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61.	Include in the standards at a minimum the following list of noise sources: motorcycles, hot rods, snowmobiles, all-terrain and other recreational vehicles, jet skis, power boats, tour boats, boom boxes, automobile-based music systems, leaf blowers and barking dogs, as well as noises associated with special events and industrial activities.	●	⊙				○					✓	
62.	Amend the Zoning Law to include the recommendations of Greenway Guide E5 on lighting to prevent glare, protect the night sky, and enhance the town’s nighttime character.	●	⊙	⊙			○					✓	
63.	Require conservation subdivision and the use of conservation easements to protect viewsheds.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
64.	Prepare design guidelines based upon the Greenway Guides A1 through A4 for vegetation clearing and other scenic concerns.	●			⊙		○					✓	
65.	Amend the Communication Facilities and Towers regulations to reduce the 150-foot tower allowance and to address the need for camouflage or use of existing structures to minimize visual impact.	●	⊙	⊙			○					✓	
66.	Amend the Zoning Law to require the integration of existing forested areas and significant trees into site plans for new residential and commercial development.	●	⊙				○					✓	
67.	Amend the Site Plan Regulations to clearly require a minimum number and size of street trees and other landscaping in new developments.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
68.	Prepare conservation regulations to implement the natural resource inventory mapping prepared for The Rhinebeck Plan.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
69.	Design new conservation regulations to allow development based upon the carrying capacity of the land, maintaining biodiversity and protecting environmental features.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
70.	Create standards to protect, conserve, enhance, restore and maintain significant natural features and the ecological connections between them.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
71.	Exclude such sensitive lands as wetlands, streams, and steep slopes of 25% or more, when calculating density in a conventional subdivision or conservation development. Develop criteria and standards to govern siting of structures to avoid such areas by establishing specific building envelopes on subdivision plans.	●	⊙				○					✓	

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72.	Coordinate the Planning Board’s approval of open space developments with the Building Department so that building permits are issued in conformance with the approved open space plans. Protect the open space in open space developments with conservation easements held by local land trusts.	●	⊙				○					✓	
73.	Establish a Wetlands Law to regulate development activities in wetland areas that are not regulated by the DEC.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
74.	Establish buffers to wetlands, based upon a scientific evaluation of their importance in preserving surface and ground water quality and their numerous other benefits.	●	⊙				○					✓	
75.	Limit tree clearing in wetland buffers and require tree surveys in wetland buffers when new development applications are made, in order to provide a baseline for enforcing cutting provisions.	●	⊙				○					✓	
76.	Develop local regulations for vernal pool protection, which require assessment of their biological values and the condition of critical terrestrial habitats.	●	⊙				○					✓	
77.	Regulate development within and adjacent to wetlands, streams and flood-prone areas.	●	⊙				○					✓	
78.	Develop regulations that restrict or ban the use of fertilizers, pesticides and/or herbicides in areas adjacent to sensitive aquatic environments or over aquifers. Exempt farmers who use “Best Management Practices” from such regulations. Explore ways to provide additional information to homeowners about use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.	●	⊙				○					✓	
79.	Amend the Water Resources Protection Overlay Zone to ensure concerted protection and preservation of the quality and quantity of groundwater resources that the town depends upon.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
80.	Carefully regulate densities and land uses in aquifer and aquifer recharge areas to permit maximum recharge and to protect water quality.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	
81.	Require open space development for residential subdivisions in the Water Resources Protection Overlay District, in order to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓	

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82.	Prohibit use of infiltration basins unless surface water quality flowing into the infiltration basin is essentially pollutant-free.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
83.	Adopt performance standards for the storage of: animal wastes, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides; petroleum tank storage; and salt and coal.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
84.	Amend the Zoning to adopt requirements for innovatively managing stormwater—as described by the Low Impact Development Center.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
85.	Restrict all types of commercial use that could adversely impact or degrade water resources such as gas stations, petroleum bulk storage, and dry cleaners.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
86.	Adjust minimum lot sizes so that development that is dependent on individual wells and septic disposal systems is based on soil suitability, among other factors.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
87.	Enact revisions to the Town’s Water Resources Protection Overlay District to require aquifer impact assessments.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
88.	Restrict community commercial development to the existing commercial area along Route 9 just south of Route 9G.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
89.	Support and complement the village center through careful review of commercial development. Discourage development that will detract from the ability of the village of Rhinebeck to function as the primary commercial center of the community. Concentrate new commercial development in the village, where infrastructure exists or can be efficiently provided.	●	⊙				○					✓
90.	Prohibit additional “big box” businesses by further limiting the size of retail facilities in the town. Establish a maximum of 8,000 square feet on all retail development.	●	⊙				○					✓
91.	Review and amend the current permitted Principal and Special Permit uses allowed in the Town’s non-residential zoning districts to ensure that they are appropriate uses to serve community needs.	●	⊙				○					✓
92.	Strive to restrict land uses that could be classified as “adult uses” and which have negative secondary adverse effects on their neighborhoods.	●	⊙				○					✓

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93.	Enact a formula fast food amendment to the Zoning Law that disallows the establishment of fast-food chain stores in the town.	●	⊙				○					✓	
94.	Provide clear design standards for architectural compatibility, scale and form, signage, colors, landscaping and lighting for all development in the town.	●	⊙				○					✓	
95.	Prohibit strip commercial development in the town by preparing and adopting standards that mandate: connecting roadways; shared driveways and parking; controlled signage; high-quality landscaping and architecture; and a mix of uses.	●	⊙				○					✓	
96.	Encourage commercial development in clusters, rather than in strip development.	●	⊙				○					✓	
97.	Create pedestrian networks and crosswalks for all commercial development an redevelopment in order to create connections to shared parking, public transportation and walking between stores and to nearby housing.	●	⊙				○					✓	
98.	Consolidate commercial entrances on roads, where possible, and mandate the use of internal service streets as an alternative to them.	●	⊙				○					✓	
99.	Unify the streetscape with continuous street trees, and where possible, planted medians, to prevent unlimited left turns.	●	⊙				○					✓	
100.	Amend the Zoning Law to incorporate Greenway Guide E3 on parking, and bring the town’s parking requirements into conformance with the Guide and the recommendations of such organizations as the National Parking Association and the Institute of Transportation Engineers.	●	⊙				○					✓	
101.	Ensure that non-conforming signs, lighting, landscaping and other site issues are brought into compliance with the terms and conditions of the Zoning Law.	●	⊙				○					✓	
102.	Promote sustainable forestry management in the town as a viable economic activity by examining the Zoning Law and town policies to make them forester-friendly.	●	⊙				○	○11				✓	
103.	Promote home occupations in the town and establish a permit procedure for monitoring and enforcement.	●	⊙				○					✓	
104.	Expand the home occupations provisions of the Zoning Law to set additional thresholds for home occupation activities that exceed specific thresholds.	●	⊙				○					✓	

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105.	Address parking, lighting, signage, noise and daily business activity to avoid impacts from home occupations on nearby residential properties.	●	⊙				○					✓	
106.	Implement the changes to the light industrial and office/research facility parcels recommended in the proposed Zoning Map in The Rhinebeck Plan.	●	⊙				○	○19				✓	
107.	Use historic or unique farm buildings for specialized, commercial operations, such as antique shops or gift shops. Use a performance- based approach.	●	⊙				○					✓	
108.	Capitalize on Rhinebeck’s proximity to regional tourism attractions and destinations by encouraging inns, bed-and-breakfasts and other facilities serving tourists.	●	⊙				○	⊙19				✓	
109.	Re-examine the regulations for bed & breakfasts to ensure compatibility with and to reduce impacts on residential neighborhoods.	●	⊙				○					✓	
110.	Amend the Zoning Law to include a section on tree and topsoil removal, grading and excavating. Require the Planning Board to implement the regulations.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙	○					✓	
111.	Require developers to create interior access connecting parking lots, internal service roads, and shared accesses, where possible, on all future commercial development along Routes 9 and 9G.	●	⊙				○					✓	
112.	Encourage pedestrian access to commercial areas from nearby residential areas by requiring the installation of sidewalks at the time of site plan review.	●	⊙				○					✓	
113.	Establish criteria and amend the Zoning Law to require that new development meet the criteria, so that its overall impact will be positive on the environment, historic and cultural resources, community character, public revenues, the local economy and existing business districts.	●	⊙				○	⊙19				✓	
114.	Encourage the use of solar heat and electricity in development plans.	●	⊙			⊙	○	⊙18				✓	
115.	Consider for all subdivisions, and require where appropriate, sidewalks to move residents safely and pleasantly, without a car. Provide linkages to other sidewalks.	●	⊙				○					✓	
116.	Create off-street walking and bicycle paths, as opportunities arise, to link neighborhoods to each other, to the hamlet of Rhinecliff, to the village and to surrounding towns.	●	⊙				○					✓	

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117.	Work with DOT to create safer town roads by establishing a townwide speed limit, by establishing a 25 MPH limit on historic town roads and by eliminating future widening of town roads where no parking is expected.	●	⊙				○					✓
118.	Require traffic calming techniques in new development, to effectively reduce and enforce traffic speeds, and to make roads more pedestrian-friendly.	●	●		●		○	⊙23				✓
119.	Encourage adoption of a town wide "green building" standard based on the US Green Building Council's "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building rating system.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
120.	Use design standards to define principles for siting houses around a site's natural features.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
121.	Use best management practices for conserving Vernal Pool-Breeding Amphibians in Residential and Commercial Developments.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
122.	Establish a way for developers, neighbors, environmental groups and other stakeholders to shape projects before significant engineering is accomplished.	●	⊙				○					✓
123.	Restrict the creation of new community water and sewer systems except in locations or under conditions designated in the Rhinebeck Plan for such services.	●	⊙				○					✓
124.	Establish stormwater management districts, where appropriate, as a condition of subdivision or site plan approval for newly developed areas.	●	⊙				○					✓
125.	Ensure that stormwater management basins are always regarded as an aesthetic and environmental asset to the community, as opposed to just a necessity.	●	⊙				○					✓
126.	Establish performance standards that encourage on-site recharge and water quality protection of stormwater.	●	⊙			⊙	○					✓
127.	Encourage the Planning Board to consider installation of bicycle racks during site plan review.		●			⊙	○					✓
128.	Include potential development of the former Hucklebush Rail Line as a rail-trail in all future project reviews and studies by the town.	●	⊙			⊙	○	⊙10 ⊙14				✓
129.	Adopt Design Guidelines that incorporate patterns illustrating open space subdivision design.	●	⊙				○					✓

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130.	Permit and promote accessory farm businesses such as “Pick Your Own” and Christmas tree cutting in the Zoning Law, to capitalize on their tourism potential.	●	⊙				○					✓	
131.	Provide sidewalks and crosswalks along existing or potential walking routes near schools, places of worship, parks, and other community gathering places.	●	⊙	○	●	⊙	○	● ³ ⊙ ²³				✓	
132.	Develop standards for the installation of fences that are compatible with the town’s unique natural, scenic and historic character. Promote the use of stone walls.	●	⊙				○					✓	
133.	In new subdivisions, discourage the conversion of indigenous plant life on a site to manicured lawns and gardens. Set standards for the clearing of vegetation.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙	○					✓	
134.	Prepare guidelines for the design of deer fencing that would act as a deterrent to deer damage, and blend with the landscape, as well.	●	⊙				○					✓	
135.	Amend the Subdivision Regulations to encourage applicants to view the Center for Rural Massachusetts’ 60-minute video, Conserving Rural Character.	●	⊙				○	⊙ ⁷					
136.	Amend the subdivision regulations to require use of dry hydrants and impoundments in subdivisions, where feasible, for fire fighting purposes.	●	⊙				○						
137.	Amend the Highway Specifications to be consistent with <i>Residential Streets</i> (latest edition) and other state-of-the-art planning techniques.	●	⊙	⊙	⊙		○						
138.	Review town regulations regarding access specifications for private roads and driveways, which relate to length, slope, width, materials and drainage.	●	⊙	⊙	⊙		○						
139.	Permit private roads and common driveways in conservation subdivisions provided that maintenance and access protections are in place.	●	⊙				○	⊙ ¹⁸					
140.	Amend the Subdivision Regulations so they work in tandem with the Zoning Law, especially for conservation subdivisions.	●	⊙				○						
141.	Amend the Subdivision Regulations to clearly require a minimum number and size of street trees and other landscaping in new developments.	●	⊙			⊙	○						
142.	Adopt standards for bicycle routes, lanes, and paths, consistent with applicable State DOT standards.	●	⊙	○	⊙	⊙	○						

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											✓	
143.	Review accessory apartment requirements in the Zoning Law and re-visit the size limits, water and sewer requirements and other conditions as a form of affordable housing.	●	⊙				○					✓	
144.	Consider use of appropriate municipally owned lands for development of small (6 to 12 unit) affordable multi-family dwellings designed to resemble traditional farm clusters.	●	⊙			⊙	○	⊙11				✓	
Rhinecliff Subcommittee: Comprehensive Plan Committee													
145.	Delineate the area that comprises the hamlet of Rhinecliff, and classify this area as a Rhinecliff Overlay.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
146.	Craft zoning provisions specific to the Rhinecliff as described in the comprehensive Plan.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
147.	Develop and integrate design standards into the Zoning Law that recognize the uniqueness of the hamlet’s architecture and streetscapes.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
148.	Require consistent setbacks from the street, where feasible in the hamlet.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
149.	Require that all new development in the hamlet be by special use permit, and require the use of performance standards to minimize or avoid impacts.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
150.	Limit the square footage of new dwellings and the expansion of existing ones to prevent proliferation of oversized, out-of-character homes.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
151.	Prevent the building of second or third story additions proposed for one or two-story buildings, which are out of character with the buildings surrounding them.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
152.	Prevent the building of a large building, built to replace a portion or all of a demolished one, and now out of scale with surrounding buildings.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	
153.	Enact a building scale regulation in the Zoning Law, which controls the mass of new houses in the hamlet.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓	

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓
154.	Engage Rhinecliff residents in the development of a single family zoning schedule that requires new homes to be compatible with adjacent homes.						⊙	O2				✓
155.	Require site plan approval for expansion of existing residential dwellings in the hamlet.	●	⊙				⊙	O2				✓
	Open Space — Affordable Housing Committee											
156.	Establish a PDR program in the town and appoint a committee to identify lands for purchase of development rights.	●				○		⊙11				
157.	Adopt a town Policy requiring an assessment of the conservation value of all town-owned lands or lands under its control, prior to development, transfer, lease, exchange or sale as “surplus”.	●				⊙		○11				
158.	Identify the open space and natural resource inventories completed for The Rhinebeck Plan and the “Significant Habitat” study as the Conservation Open Areas Inventory and Conservation Open Areas Map. Designate the town’s Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) as a Conservation Board and empower the Board to review and make recommendations on development projects that have the potential to adversely affect natural, cultural and open space resources.	●	⊙				○					✓
159.	Integrate the information contained in the Town’s “Significant Habitat” study into the site plan and subdivision review process and SEQR review process.	●	⊙				○					✓
160.	Secure conservation easements on all working farms in the town over the next five years.	○						●10 ⊙11				
161.	Set priorities for potential natural area preservation as discussed in the comprehensive plan.	●	⊙			○		⊙11				
162.	Consider hiring a grant writer to pursue funding from county, state and federal agencies for open space acquisition. Work with Winnakee and other land trusts.	●				○		⊙10				
163.	Consider voluntary TDR among two or more property owners, but within the overall density standards of the town’s zoning regulations.	●	⊙			○		●10				

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164.	Work with Winnakee Land Trust and others to find ways for landowners to use limited development techniques, such as reduced densities in residential subdivisions, as an alternative to full build-out.	●	⊙				○	●10				
165.	Work with land trusts and preservation organizations to secure conservation easements on historic structures, historic facades, historic sites and landscapes.	●	⊙	⊙		○		⊙9 ●10				
166.	Prepare and distribute a brochure that explains the benefits of donating conservation easements. Grant reduced assessments on encumbered property.	○				●		⊙11 ●15				
167.	Identify and acquire riverfront lands for recreation, parks and scenic overlooks, using the town’s Open Space Plan as a guide	●				○		⊙11				
168.	Work with the tax assessor to determine the feasibility of revising the Town’s assessment methods for priority farmland, forestland and other open space parcels.	●				○		⊙11 ●15				
169.	Create an Agricultural Advancement District and regulations that would allow the Town right of first refusal for outright purchase or purchase of development rights from agricultural properties and to facilitate assistance to the property owner to seek alternatives to selling land for development.	●				○		⊙11				
170.	Explore the feasibility of a “value and use” assessment for farmland, forestland and easements, rather than the current “highest and best use” assessment.	●				○		⊙11				
171.	Work with local land trusts to acquire, develop, hold, monitor and enforce conservation easements.	●				⊙		●10 ⊙11				
172.	Encourage the Dutchess County Agricultural Society to set aside a portion of the Fair proceeds to benefit farmers and farmland preservation in Rhinebeck.	●						⊙11				
173.	Work with local land trusts to secure conservation easements along scenic roads in the community.	●	⊙			⊙		●10 ⊙11				
174.	Operating farms that have prime agricultural soils should have a priority for the proposed Purchase of Development Rights program.	●				⊙		⊙11				
175.	Prepare and adopt an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.	●	⊙			⊙		○11				

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176.	Adopt an Open Space and Affordable Housing Plan as an addendum to the Rhinebeck Plan, subject to Town Board review and approval.	●					○	○11				
177.	Adopt a local “right-to-farm” law designed to protect a farmer against regulations and private nuisance suits.	●	⊙			⊙		○11				
178.	Enact local “Right-to-Farm,” Right-to-Market” and “Right to Practice Forestry” legislation.	●	⊙			⊙		○11				
179.	Promote the creative use of agricultural and natural lands in the town to serve the needs of such niche markets.					⊙		⊙11				
180.	Include a range of housing types and sizes in the PCN to meet the needs of diverse income groups.	●	⊙			○						
181.	Support housing for people in all stages of life by creating an Inclusionary Housing Program and require that at least ten percent of the units be affordable.	●	●			○						
182.	Create an Open Space and Affordable Housing Board to lead the Town’s efforts in identifying opportunities for affordable housing that are in keeping with the Town’s goals to protect community character and open space.	●										
183.	At the time of the creation of an Open Space and Affordable Housing Board, develop a procedure for Planning Board referral of site plan and subdivision applications to ensure oversight of new development in respect to the Town’s efforts to protect open space and create opportunities for the provision of new affordable housing.	●	⊙					⊙11				
184.	Prohibit gated communities in the town.	●	⊙				○					
185.	Develop a set of Affordable Housing strategies that would mandate inclusion of affordable housing at the rate of 10 percent of the total number of market-rate units in any new development of 5 units or more. Allow in-lieu payment for affordable housing units in new developments of 4 units or less. Allow transfer of inclusionary obligations to other parcels within Town under limited conditions. option for preservation of open space and affordable housing.	●	⊙				○	○11				

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
186.	Develop “Least Cost” strategies to allow creation of new housing units such as accessory apartments, cottage units, two-family units, or multi-family units.	●	⊙				○	○11				
187.	Establish a Community Trust Fund using the fund as seed money to achieve the town's open space and affordable housing goals.	●					○	⊙10				
188.	Consider creation of a Community Trust Fund to serve as a funding option for preservation of open space and affordable housing	●					○	⊙10				
189.	Create a mechanism in Town Code to maintain work-force housing stock for an appropriate period of time. Ensure that the units are available for as long as legally possible. Utilize the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development as a resource in establishing work-force housing standards.	●	⊙				○	○11				
190.	Use SEQR to analyze the necessity of providing affordable housing in new developments as mitigation to minimize adverse effects of new single-family development.	●	⊙				○					
191.	Amend the Zoning Law to allow a reasonable number of homes in suitable locations that are within economic reach of town residents by allowing development in priority growth areas.	●	⊙				○	○11				
192.	Prohibit outright teardowns of existing housing stock in the town by enacting a demolition delay zoning provision for historic structures	●	⊙					○11				
193.	Incorporate strategies to address the needs of handicapped persons in all public improvements at the design and approval stages of development.	●	⊙					○11				
194.	Develop sidewalk and walking path specifications to ensure handicapped access.	●			⊙			○11				
195.	Appoint an ad hoc committee to advise the Planning Board on meeting the specialized needs of handicapped persons.	●	⊙					○11				
196.	Support first-time homebuyers in priority growth areas through tax credits or direct down payment assistance.	●						○11				
197.	Encourage owners of historic barns to take advantage of New York State's investment tax credits for their rehabilitation as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.	●		⊙				○11				

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
198.	Promote local farming by establishing activities like a bicycle tour of farms, farm tours and harvest festivals.	●						○11				
199.	Continue to support the Farmer’s Market within the village.	●						○11				
200.	Explore the feasibility of an indoor farmers market at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds or other existing structures (like barns) in the town.	●	⊙					○11				
201.	Encourage “agri-tourism.” Support continued production of a map listing farm stands, farm products and farms to visit.	●						○11				
202.	Permit recreational uses of farmland and forested lands to strengthen the economic viability of these open spaces and ensure that soils supporting these activities are protected for future generations.	●						○11				
203.	Encourage cultivation of energy crops, which offers an alternative to traditional farm crops.	●						○11				
204.	Identify sources of funds for rehabilitating and adaptively reusing farm structures to aid in their preservation.	●						○11				
205.	Encourage farmers to establish Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations in the town.	●						○11				
206.	Identify farmers who may be willing to establish a community garden for residents who may want to establish a vegetable garden, but lack the land to do so.	●						○11				
207.	Encourage the School District, Fairgrounds, Hospital, the nursing homes and Astor Home to purchase vegetables, fruits and other locally grown products	●						○11				
	Town Historian & Historic Preservation Committee											
208.	Establish historic district zoning, architectural review procedures and local landmark standards to protect the rich cultural resources of the community.	●	⊙					○9				
209.	Charter the town historian with coordinating an archeological resource inventory and preparation of an archeological sensitivity map.							●9				

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		Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee ¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
210.	Preserve archaeological resources by carefully considering sensitive archaeological zones during the SEQR reviews of proposed developments.		●			⊙		⊙9				
211.	Examine the potential for rebuilding and/or adaptive re-use (salvaging) of the town-owned historic barn at the intersection of Stone Church and Yantz Roads.	●		○	⊙	⊙		⊙9				
212.	Inventory all historic barns in the town, directing the Town historian to coordinate the activity, and provide educational materials to help preserve them.	●						○9 ○11				
213.	Nominate historic buildings and districts for state and National Register of Historic Places designation and create criteria to govern local designation.	●						○ 9				
214.	Develop a list of all historic properties in the town including historic properties of national, state and local significance.	●						○ 9				
215.	Establish historic designations for locally recognized structures and their landscape settings, and include the list in The Rhinebeck Plan.	●						○ 9				
Town Planning Board												
216.	Work with developers, Winnakee Land Trust and other land trusts to craft conservation easements that define areas of a site that are not to be disturbed.		●					●10				
217.	Use SEQR to help protect the town’s agricultural heritage.	●	●			○		⊙11				
218.	Work with local land trusts to secure conservation easements on all conserved lands in conservation developments.		●			○		●10				
219.	Plan for public hiking, biking, walking and cross-country skiing trails on common open space lands.	●	●			⊙						
220.	Continue to work with Winnakee and other land trusts to acquire conservation easements on open space lands.		●			⊙		●10				
221.	Require all new subdivision applications to include provisions for hiking, biking and walking paths and where appropriate, bicycle paths or dedicated bike lanes. Design the trails to link to other trail networks and eventually to such destinations as the Village.		●			⊙		⊙11				

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222.	Limit development, to the greatest extent possible, to already existing fragmented areas through the use of open space development.	●	●			⊙	○	⊙11				
223.	Work with developers or landowners who wish to sell their land for partial development, with preservation restrictions placed on the remaining open space.	●	○			⊙		●10				
224.	Use SEQR to the fullest extent of the law, to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts on sensitive environmental resources.	●	●		●	⊙	○	●18				
225.	Use SEQR to assess the consistency of an application with the LWRP and to implement the LWRP and other relevant plans, including The Rhinebeck Plan.	●	●	⊙	●	⊙		●18				
226.	Use SEQR to identify and address school capacity issues, and require that new, large-scale development proposals be subject to a fiscal impact analysis.		●	⊙			○	⊙19				
227.	Review and address impacts on the unique or characteristics of a CEA prior to approvals and mitigate or require project changes accordingly.	●	●	⊙		○		●18				
228.	Preserve the visual integrity of Rhinebeck’s Scenic Districts as well as other scenic viewsheds throughout the town.		●	⊙			○					✓
229.	Consider the loss of farm structures on the town’s rural, historic and agricultural character during the application process for new development.	●	●			⊙	○	○11				
230.	Work with developers to create segments of hiking, biking and walking trails identified on the trails map during subdivision and site plan reviews.		●			⊙	○					✓
231.	Review the submissions of developers and recommend changes to them to ensure their compatibility with The Rhinebeck Plan.		⊙									
232.	Identify architectural elements that have historic value and incorporate them into any proposed site development as assets to be preserved.	●	⊙			⊙	○					
233.	Address the potential for public transit during the Planning Board’s review of proposed residential and non-residential developments.		●				○					✓
234.	Require public access for hiking, biking and walking trails in new developments.		●			⊙	○					✓
235.	Adopt standards that require biodiversity assessment for proposed development.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙	○	⊙25				✓

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Town Board Policies and Programs													
236.	Study the potential for a connection of the north parking lot at the Train Station with Slate Dock Road. Consider the use of shuttle buses.	●		⊙				⊙8 ⊙16					
237.	Adopt a common definition of “rural,” so that programs and activities can be adjusted to retain Rhinebeck’s “rural” classification.	●		⊙									
238.	Create and adopt a hiking, biking and walking trails map as an official town map, and display it in Town Hall for use by the public and the Planning Board.	●	⊙	⊙		○							
239.	Reintroduce the Dial-A-Ride program.	○						⊙8 ●18					
240.	Appoint a committee on volunteerism, whose purpose it will be to assist in the recruitment of volunteers, and the pairing of them with local organizations in need of volunteer assistance.	●											
241.	Develop a program of municipal volunteerism, in which residents are urged to participate on a range of committees in support of town needs.	●											
242.	Preserve scenic district qualities by becoming an “Interested Party” in the SEQR review process for proposed projects outside of Rhinebeck town boundaries.	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙							
243.	Create an Agriculture Conservation Overlay Zoning District that regulates the development of prime farmland soils.	●	⊙				○	⊙11					
244.	Consider amendments to the Town Code to require all new residential and non-residential buildings to be built to the US EPA’s Energy Star Standards.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙							
245.	Investigate and consider the use of innovative methods for encouraging energy conservation and discouraging wasteful energy consumption.	●		⊙		⊙							
246.	Adopt a policy that site plans approved by the Planning Board cannot be altered or modified through a Zoning Board of Appeals review.	●	⊙				○						
247.	Disallow large-scale events attracting mass gatherings on farms and in forests, limiting them solely to the Dutchess County Fairgrounds.	●		⊙				○11					

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248.	Promote the use of best management practices for farms and forest management areas in the town.	●						○11				
249.	Encourage the Dutchess County Health Department to require septic system inspections, including dye tests, upon sale of improved properties.	○		⊙				●5				
250.	Establish thresholds appropriate to the town for Type 1 Actions under SEQR.	●	⊙	⊙		○	○					
251.	Designate certain CEAs as Type 1 Actions as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙	○					
252.	In conjunction with CEA designations recommended in The Rhinebeck Plan, prepare and enact a Town of Rhinebeck Type 1 Action List, circulate the list to all state and local agencies that are involved in land development activities and make the list readily available at Town Hall for all landowners, design professionals, developers and builders.	●					○					
253.	Establish public access to the existing trails on town-owned lands in the town of Red Hook.	●		⊙		⊙		⊙18				
254.	Appoint Planning Board members who represent diverse interests, including architecture, agriculture, business, natural and cultural resources and long-term community advocacy.	●	●									
255.	Ensure that municipal entities can effectively implement the recommendations of The Rhinebeck Plan to enhance rural character by providing them with clear direction, training and resources.	●	●	⊙								
256.	Require Dutchess County Planning Federation certification of all Planning Board members.	●	●	⊙								
257.	Establish a policy and procedures for Zoning Board of Appeals’ referrals to the Planning Board for advisory opinions on proposed zoning variances.	○	⊙				●					
258.	Require municipal officials on the Planning and Zoning Boards to participate in the seminar-based Land Use Learning Program of Pace University.	●	●				●					
259.	Consider incentives (stipends) for town residents who volunteer for fire and emergency medical services as an alternative to the use of paid professionals.	●										

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260.	Promote and assist in the recruitment efforts for volunteer fire and EMS workers.	●										
261.	Recognize the significant volunteer commitment of all town-appointed board members.	●										
262.	Develop a town-wide program for rewarding special service, including awards presented ceremoniously for a broad range of volunteer activities.	●										
263.	Consider holding a town-wide, outdoor event that focuses on volunteerism, rewards volunteers and signs-on new ones in all categories.	●										
264.	Reward volunteers by publicizing their achievements on the town Web site and in local newspapers.	●										
265.	Appoint an ad hoc committee to study the benefits of merging town and village services, including police, fire, highway and waste management.	●						●¹ ⊙¹⁸				
266.	Create a Municipal and Land Use Committee to find ways for the town, village and School District to coordinate their policies and decisions.	●		⊙				⊙¹ ⊙¹⁷				
267.	Explore the pros and cons of restructuring of the Highway Department from an elected to an appointed Superintendent position.	●		○	○		○					
268.	Investigate alternatives to the use of road salt on town roads and encourage the County and State to do likewise.	●			⊙		○					
269.	Consider installation of stop signs or other traffic calming devices in Rhinecliff, (especially along Kelly Street and Orchard Street) to slow down traffic in the hamlet.	●			⊙		○					
Town Planner												
270.	Prepare Scenic Resource Protection Regulations in the Zoning Law ensuring scenic integrity in all development during the review and approval process.	●	⊙	○		⊙						
271.	Establish procedures for the electronic submission of development applications, including their SEQR documents, to enable their interactive viewing at review meetings.		●	○								

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272.	Work with such groups as the Hudson River Valley Greenway, Winnakee Land Trust, and Scenic Hudson to create opportunities for public access.	●	⊙	○				●10 ⊙14				
273.	Create a public access point to the River at the South Mill Road shoreline (Vanderburgh Cover area) for the benefit of canoeists and kayakers.	●		○				●10 ⊙14				
274.	Encourage owners of land bordering the River to use ecologically sound vegetation protection practices, and discourage or regulate re-grading of lands.	●	●	⊙		⊙						
275.	Guide land use decision-making in the Coastal Zone through the use of The Rhinebeck Plan, the LWRP and the Greenway Guidelines.		●	⊙								
276.	Develop an Official Map identifying existing and proposed roads, trails and parks, to ensure that future roads and parks and trails are consistent with the Plan.	●	⊙	○								
277.	Officially designate roads with significant natural, cultural and scenic resources, and adopt a scenic roads program to protect and enhance these corridors.	●		○								
278.	Design new roads to enhance scenic character and the rural appearance of the community.	●	⊙	○	⊙							
279.	Maintain the scenic and historic character of intersections in the town. Carefully plan changes, especially Mt. Ruisen and River Roads and Ryan and River Roads.	●		○	⊙							
280.	Urge the Planning Board and Town Board to work closely with the highway agencies to coordinate road projects and ensure consistency with The Plan.	●	●	⊙	●			●3				
281.	Analyze existing recreational facilities, goals established in the Plan, and project the demand for additional recreational facilities to serve future population growth.	●		○				⊙14 ⊙18				
282.	Work with private landowners and Winnakee Land Trust and like-minded groups to secure public access to major water bodies, especially the Hudson River, at all locations where access is feasible and desirable.	●		○				⊙10				
283.	Acquire land for public use well in advance of need.	●		○				○10				
284.	Update and adopt administrative policies and project review checklists for the Planning and Zoning Boards and applicants to streamline the review process.	●	⊙	○				⊙18				
285.	Provide training opportunities for the Planning Board in the effective use of SEQR, the Greenway Guides, Rhinebeck Design Guidelines, the LWRP and other plans.	●	●	○								

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286.	Provide the Planning Board with adequate planning resources to better enable them to carry out the Board's new responsibilities under The Rhinebeck Plan.	●	⊙	⊙								
287.	Train an assistant to the Planning Board, or a Planning Board member, in the use of GIS to facilitate conservation subdivision design and other planning techniques.	●	●	⊙								
288.	Plan tours for the Planning Board that illustrate examples of conservation subdivisions and traditional neighborhood development.	●	●	⊙								
289.	Improve amenities at LOOP bus stop locations, including shelters, kiosks, benches, route maps and trash receptacles	○	⊙	○	⊙			⊙8 ●18				
290.	Consider appointing planning staff to research or promote economic development or to assist with implementing The Rhinebeck Plan policies.	●		○				○19				
291.	Consider The Rhinebeck Plan in the planning and design of all capital construction projects, whether owned and operated by the town, village, county or state.	●	⊙	⊙				●1 ●18				
292.	Hold all new public construction projects and re-development of existing projects and facilities to the same standards of design, as are private development projects.	●	⊙	⊙				●1 ●18				
293.	Request that Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development map significant stands of forest as a tool for the Planning Board and CAC.	○	⊙	○		⊙		●8				
294.	Minimize the clearing of vegetation and preserve important vegetation and habitat by amending the Zoning Law to require the use of conservation subdivision design on parcels where forests or significant trees exist.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙						
295.	Work with surrounding towns to ensure that there is regional watershed-based cooperation for all development near wetlands, surface waters and other water environmentally sensitive resource areas.	●	⊙	○		⊙		⊙18				
296.	Work with NY DOT and County Planning to develop a roundabout at the intersection of State Routes 9 and 9G.	○		⊙	⊙			●3 ⊙8				
297.	Work with the NY DOT to eliminate their current long-range plan to widen Route 9G throughout the town and to ensure that Routes 9 and 9G are not “improved.”	○		⊙				●3 ⊙8				
298.	Work with the NY DOT to find ways to reduce the area of highway on Route 9 south of the village, from four lanes to two lanes with dedicated bicycle lanes.	○	⊙	⊙				●3 ⊙8				

#	Task Description	Responsible Agency							Schedule			✓ Task Completed?
		Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee ¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
299.	Work with the transportation agencies to encourage the use of newly approved wooden guide rails or box beam Corten steel as an alternative choice.	○	⊙	⊙	●			●3 ⊙8				
300.	Continue to coordinate bike planning with the county and the state.	○	⊙	⊙		⊙		⊙8 ●18				
301.	Encourage the schools to incorporate curriculum on the importance of planning, conservation, and development.	○		○		⊙		●17				
302.	Consider undertaking a multi-year media outreach program, using a combination of PANIDA, newspaper and Internet media for the purpose of educating residents about natural resource conservation efforts.	●		○		○		○25				
303.	Maintain and enhance cooperation in land use planning between the town and village.	○		○				⊙1				
304.	Prepare and enact an inter-municipal agreement to create a “Consolidated Planning Board,” to cooperate with the village on land use planning matters.	●	⊙	⊙				●1				
305.	Create a task force advised by a professional planner to develop a detailed plan for the structure and function of the consolidated Planning Board.	●	⊙	⊙				●1				
306.	Enter into agreements with Red Hook, Tivoli, Milan, Clinton, and Hyde Park to create compatible, local regulations to protect important resources.	○		○		⊙		○18				
307.	Enter into agreements with the town of Ulster and the city of Kingston to create compatible, local regulations for protection of water, scenic and aesthetic resources.	○		○		⊙		○18				
308.	Consider establishment of inter-municipal overlay districts to protect, enhance and develop community resources.	○		○		⊙		○18				
309.	Work closely with other local, county, state and federal agencies to ensure that The Rhinebeck Plan is carefully considered for large-scale projects.	●	⊙	○				●18				
310.	Actively participate in the Northern Dutchess Alliance to facilitate regional planning.	●		○				●22				
311.	Encourage the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council to give priority funding for permitting compact growth in walkable neighborhoods.	⊙		○				⊙8				

#	Task Description	Responsible Agency							Schedule			✓ Task Completed?
		Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee ¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
312.	Encourage the School District to construct new schools in the village or, if that is not possible, then only in the Astor Flats TND district.	⊙	⊙	○				⊙1 ●17				
313.	Work with the Northern Dutchess Alliance and other towns and villages in Northern Dutchess to establish a joint tourism information booth.	○		⊙				○18 ⊙22				
314.	Work with the village to establish gateways that clearly demark the transition from the rural town to the more developed village.	○	⊙	⊙				○1 ⊙3				
315.	Instruct town officials in the use of the “Virtual Private Network” (VPN)-enabled computer at Town Hall, so that decision makers have ready access to up-to-date GIS data. Provide residents with the same information.											
316.	Provide electronic versions of the Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations for viewing and downloading on the Internet.	●		○								
	Rhinecliff Issues											
317.	Enforce existing parking requirements and increase penalties for illegal parking in the hamlet of Rhinecliff.	●						⊙16				
318.	Make every effort to ensure that the Rhinecliff Train Station remains a local transit access point as opposed to a regional transit destination.	●	⊙	○				⊙8 ⊙16				
319.	Consider the use of parking fees at the Rhinecliff Train Station, in order to discourage the use of the parking lot by non-residents.	●			⊙			⊙16				
320.	Maintain and support the Levi P. Morton Memorial Library as the center for cultural, educational and social life in Rhinecliff.	●						⊙7 ⊙16				
321.	Ensure that the U.S. Post Office at Rhinecliff is maintained as an important community service and place for interaction between Rhinecliff neighbors.	●						⊙16				
322.	Encourage re-establishment of ferry service at Rhinecliff as a tourism activity.	○						⊙13 ⊙16				

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		Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee ¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
323.	Establish a gateway that clearly demarks the transition from the rural town to the more developed hamlet of Rhinecliff.	●						⊙3 ⊙16				
324.	Town officials should work closely with responsible transportation agencies to ensure that plans for parking and shuttle buses in Rhinecliff are limited in scope.	●		○	⊙			⊙8 ⊙16				
325.	Ensure that existing hamlet roads are not widened, but rather maintained as rural, country roads.	●			●			⊙16				
326.	Investigate opportunities for educational and recreational use of the entire Rhinecliff waterfront, including Long Dock and Slate Dock Roads and the existing Town Landing in order to create and promote the best use of the waterfront.	●						⊙13 ⊙16				
327.	Ensure attractive streetscapes and pedestrian amenities in the hamlet of Rhinecliff as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.	●	⊙		⊙			⊙16				
328.	Plan for the accommodation of automobile traffic in the hamlet in a way where pedestrian comfort and safety are of the utmost importance.	●	⊙		⊙			⊙16				
329.	Continue to support and improve the Rhinebeck Town Landing for recreational use and include provision of parking alternatives to avoid aggravating parking problems in the hamlet.	●			⊙			⊙13 ⊙16				
330.	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a River interpretative center in Rhinecliff – perhaps at the Morton Memorial Library.	○						⊙7 ●16				
331.	Appoint an ad hoc committee of Rhinecliff residents to address traffic and parking challenges in the hamlet and to make recommendations about how to solve them.	●						○16				
	Conservation Advisory Council (Biodiversity, CEA & Shade Tree Committees)											
332.	Designate the town’s Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) as a Conservation Board and empower the Board to make recommendations on development projects.	●	⊙			○						
333.	Adopt the Plan’s environmental mapping as a Natural Resource Inventory for the town and appoint the CAC as the clearinghouse for information.	●				●						

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend							6 ● 8 ○				
334.	Map the location of lands that comprise significant natural, historic and cultural resources, using a computer-based GIS and make it widely available.					○						
335.	Instruct residents about Best Management Practices for septic maintenance and pump-outs to help prevent malfunctions.	●		⊙		○						
336.	Instruct part-time residents about the unique management challenges of a septic disposal system that is used only part-time.	●		⊙		○						
337.	Adopt a resolution in support of becoming an “Energy Smart Community” and encourage the Village to do the same.	●				○		⊙1				
338.	Arrange to have the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) conduct energy audits on town buildings.	●				○		⊙18				
339.	Continue to maintain and improve town-owned stormwater devices as needed. Develop a schedule for regular maintenance.	●			⊙							
340.	Use the Town’s web site to instruct residents about how to reduce stormwater runoff and maintain stormwater devices and water quality.			⊙		○						
341.	Develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program for town properties and encourage the Village, School District and private property owners to follow suit.	○			●	⊙		⊙1 ⊙17				
342.	Encourage the Town Highway Department to adhere the Integrated Pest Management program.	●		○	○							
343.	Include pedestrian and bicycle movements when authorizing road building and improvement projects.	●		●	⊙			⊙23				
344.	Initiate a Tree City USA application process with the National Arbor Day Foundation.	●				○						
345.	Develop a biodiversity plan and map, which can then be used to make biologically sound decisions during the planning process. Adopt the final maps and plan as an amendment to The Rhinebeck Plan.	●	⊙	⊙		○		○25				
346.	Work with adjacent towns and continue to work with Hudsonia Ltd., to develop strategies for protecting bio-diversity in Rhinebeck. Continue to train CAC members and volunteers in biodiversity assessment.	●		○		○		○25				

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend	Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
347.	Designate all perennial stream corridors and other surface water resources in the town as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs).	●	⊙		⊙	○		⊙18				
348.	Designate all aquifers and recharge zones in the town as CEAs.	●	⊙		⊙	○		⊙18				
349.	Designate Femcliff Forest, Snyder Swamp, Burger Hill Park and Vlei swamp as CEAs, and zone as Land Conservation Districts.	●	⊙		⊙	○						
350.	Designate all Class A Scenic Roads in Rhinebeck (listed in the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands District Plan) as CEAs, for their scenic road significance.	●	⊙		⊙	○		⊙18				
351.	Designate scenic viewsheds/historic landscapes as identified in the Comprehensive Plan as CEAs.	●	⊙		⊙	○		⊙18				
352.	Designate historic town roads in Rhinebeck, identified in the Comprehensive Plan, as CEAs under SEQR for their rural and/or scenic significance.	●	⊙		⊙	○		⊙18				
353.	Identify the core of the hamlet of Rhinecliff as a CEA under SEQR.	●	⊙		⊙	○		○16 ⊙18				
354.	Establish a committee to study and report on energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.	●				⊙						
355.	Educate residents on the benefits of wood heating as an alternative to fossil fuels, as long as they meet state and federal governments’ air quality requirements.	●				○						
356.	Adopt a green building guidebook that describes energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive building techniques that would pass town inspection.	●	⊙			○						
357.	Make information available to development applicants on the State's Green Tax Credit, and strongly support and encourage applications for use of the credit.	●				○						
358.	Require projects developed with public funding, including all town projects, to make use of green building techniques, the projects thus serving both as models and test cases for private development.	●	⊙			○						
359.	Educate residents about green building techniques and their advantages, and encourage energy-efficient habits for individuals and households.	●				○						

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend												
360.	Conduct a public education program on the appropriate use and alternatives to pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.					●							
361.	Promote recycling by publicizing Internet-based sites for swapping items that are still usable, but unwanted by their owners.					○							
362.	Support the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Household Waste Pick-up Days and educate Rhinebeck residents to properly dispose of hazardous wastes.	●				○							
363.	Monitor the potential for changes in the quantity or quality of Hudson River water.					●							
364.	Participate in all decisions that affect either the quantity or quality of water in the Hudson River by requesting Interested Agency status during the review of any SEQOR action that could affect the River’s water, or by requesting Intervener’s status on permit application reviews.	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙								
365.	Encourage use of non-invasive species for landscaping and make information about native and invasive plants available at Town Hall, the libraries, and on the web.	●	⊙		●	○							
366.	Appoint a “Shade Tree Commission” to assist the town with implementation of The Rhinebeck Plan recommendations related to tree conservation.	●				⊙							
367.	Recognize and honor individuals and companies who take the lead in planting and protecting trees.	●				⊙							
	Town Highway Department												
368.	Avoid sidewalk installation along scenic corridors or areas comprising unique rural character; instead, evaluate the clearing of brush alongside the road.	●	⊙		⊙	⊙							
369.	Develop rural and scenic road standards to guide the maintenance and preservation of historic town roads in conjunction with their designation as CEAs.	●	⊙		⊙	○							
370.	Initiate a planting program at the Town Highway Garage to buffer and enhance the overall site.	○			●	⊙							

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		Town Board	Planning Board	Town Planner Town Engineer	Highway Department	Conservation Advisory Council	Comprehensive Plan Committee ¹	Other Agency	Immediate	Near Term	On-going Implementation	
	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for "Other Agency" Legend											
371.	Disallow the clearing of healthy trees within town rights-of-ways beyond three to five feet of the pavement edge. Plant trees within road rights-of-way for traffic calming.	●			●	⊙		⊙23				
372.	Cut lower limbs of trees to ensure drivers' sight distance, as opposed to cutting down trees entirely.				●	⊙		⊙23				
373.	Reverse the town policy to remove trees and widen all remaining town roads, involving local residents and businesses in planning traffic calming efforts.	●			⊙	⊙		⊙23				
374.	Narrow overly wide residential roads by providing bicycle lanes and/or planting strips.	●			⊙	⊙		⊙23				
375.	Initiate a tree replenishment initiative that plants a tree for each tree taken down for new development and road projects.	○			●	⊙						
376.	Urge that trees be planted alongside the road, where foliage might soften the landscape in front of such public buildings as the Town Garage.	○			●	⊙						
377.	Establish a tree protection law and create a management plan for trees along roads and on town properties.	●			●	⊙						
378.	Landscape plantings between roads, sidewalks and trails with salt-tolerant species, in order to provide shade trees and a buffer for pedestrians.		●		●	⊙						
	Transportation Safety Committee											
379.	Create a Transportation Safety Committee to develop programs to minimize traffic volume and support bus, rideshare, pedestrian and bicycle transportation.	●			⊙			⊙23				
380.	Encourage the proposed Transportation Safety Committee to promote bicycle and walking commuting by identifying routes in a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan brochure.	○				⊙		⊙23				
381.	Mandate the proposed Transportation Safety Committee to work with LOOP Bus System and other bus companies to increase the number of bus stops in the town.	○			⊙			●18 ⊙23				

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382.	Place tighter limitations on traffic speed on Rhinebeck’s historic roads, including bicycle/scenic corridor designation and signage, where appropriate.	●			○			●3 ⊙23					
383.	Establish design standards for bicycle routes for town roads in order to encourage cycling activity.	○			●	⊙		⊙23					
384.	Increase public awareness of the town-wide bicycle network by posting standardized, weatherproof maps along bike routes and publish a bicycle map.	●				⊙							
385.	Promote bike safety programs for children.	○				⊙		⊙23					
	Sign Committee												
386.	Amend and enforce the Zoning Law relating to signage, as described more fully in the Comprehensive Plan.	●	⊙				○					✓	
387.	Inventory road signs and consolidate them when feasible to avoid clutter, confusion and visual blight to roadscapes. Monitor compliance with requirements for signs.	○	⊙	⊙	●	⊙		⊙21					
	Park and Recreation Committees												
388.	Utilize the soon-expanding Recreation Park to hold town-wide events that support a local cultural or charitable organization or the Park, itself.	●						●26					
389.	Promote opportunities for continued recreational activities at the site of the former schoolhouse.	●						⊙16 ⊙26					
390.	Plan and construct additional, multi-use (non-motorized) trails on the town-owned lands on Stone Church and Pells roads.	○			●	⊙		○14 ⊙18					
391.	Encourage the development of a long-range capital improvement program to maintain and upgrade recreational and other community facilities.	●						⊙14					
392.	Approve and implement a master plan for lands at the Thompson-Mazzarella Park that addresses the needs of residents of all ages.	●						⊙14					

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
393.	Encourage the Town Board and Planning Board to work with not-for-profit conservation organizations on the acquisition of additional recreational land.	●	⊙	⊙		⊙		⊙10				
394.	Consider developing a plan for construction of a community center at the Thompson-Mazzarella Park.	●						⊙18				
	Economic Development Committee/Chamber of Commerce											
395.	Establish a Town Economic Development Committee to work with the County EDC to prepare a comprehensive economic development strategy for the town.	●						○19				
396.	Support local businesses, where possible, by establishing a “Buy Local” policy for all town-purchased supplies, materials, equipment, machinery and other provisions.							●19				
397.	Start a “Think Local First” shopping program to educate residents on the advantages of buying locally.							●19				
398.	Work to maintain a low unemployment rate by supporting locally owned businesses, which create jobs locally and provide better wages and benefits than chains.							●19				
399.	Interface with the Rhinebeck business community and the Chamber of Commerce to support existing businesses, and identify new, diversified businesses.							●19				
400.	Work to ensure that new retail stores are geared toward meeting the needs of local residents, as opposed to visitors or the regional economy.		⊙					●19				
401.	Consider establishing a Commercial Land Trust (CLT) for local businesses to establish and maintain affordable commercial buildings.	●						○19 ⊙20				
402.	Identify and build on existing, small-scale local enterprises by seeking input from local entrepreneurs who are working on the cutting edge of new business creation.							●19				
403.	Encourage the Northern Dutchess Alliance to look for opportunities to identify specific job-creating uses in town, and work with County EDC to accomplish this.							●19				

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404.	Approach area banks to invest in Rhinebeck’s economic growth, in accordance with the Community Reinvestment Act of 1997 which requires banks to seek out lending opportunities.							● 19				
405.	Set up a revolving loan fund to jump-start local, home-based businesses and related out-of-town businesses that would provide employment opportunities for residents.	●						● 19				
406.	Provide information and technical assistance directly to businesses in the targeted sector.							● 19				
407.	Provide expertise to assist new businesses in the development review and approval process.							● 19				
408.	Continue to support tourism-related businesses as employment generators.							● 19				
409.	Consider conducting a market analysis to identify opportunities for new entrepreneurs and local businesses seeking to expand.							● 19				
410.	Ensure there is an appropriate jobs-housing balance in the town to prevent Rhinebeck from becoming a “bedroom community.”							● 19				
411.	Help local businesses by assisting in the creation of a community-wide e-commerce Web site for local retailers.							● 19				
412.	Encourage business owners to issue joint loyalty cards and encourage local shopping by rewarding customers with discounts, rebates or other rewards.							● 19				
413.	Amend the Zoning to require that new retail proposals be subject to an economic and community impact review prior to granting approval.	●	⊙					○ 19				
414.	Explore the use of mandatory adaptive reuse or removal of a commercial structure that remains unused for a period of 12 or more months.	●	⊙					⊙ 19				
415.	Delineate gateways to the town from surrounding towns through appropriate entrance statements, possibly upgrading town signs in order to do so.	●						⊙ 19				
416.	Facilitate the continuation of local economic activity that serves primarily the needs of residents and does not contradict community character.	●	⊙	○				⊙ 19				

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417.	Maintain the vitality of the village and prevent strip development and retail sprawl along outlying Routes 9, 9G and 308.	●	⊙	○								
418.	Permit small scale neighborhood retail and service businesses in selected locations of the town to serve only the immediate neighborhood. Applicants must demonstrate that a majority of their sales would be derived from the immediately surrounding area.	●										
419.	Discourage the architectural “formulae” that franchise businesses employ for purposes of corporate identity.	○	⊙	○								
420.	Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to work with the Dutchess County Economic Development Corp. to prepare a comprehensive economic development strategy for the town.	●						○19				
421.	To encourage light industrial and office research development consistent with Rhinebeck’s rural character, adopt updated performance standards to reduce or eliminate environmental impacts of this type of new development.	●	⊙	○								
	Arts and Culture Committee											
422.	Appoint a cultural liaison Committee whose purpose will be to encourage fine and performing arts organizations to hold their events in Rhinebeck.	●						⊙18 ⊙24				
423.	Support the programs and needs of existing cultural facilities to ensure their continuing success by assisting with funding from public and private sources.	○						●18 ⊙24				
424.	Support and expand the programs of Camp Ramapo through educational program coordination with local schools and on-campus social and cultural activities.	○						●18 ⊙24				
425.	Ensure that valued facilities such as Southlands, Linwood Spiritual Center and the Fairgrounds are utilized and supported for civic and cultural events.	○						●18 ⊙24				
426.	Promote opportunities for social activities and interaction in the physical design of existing and new community facilities.	●						●18 ⊙24				

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427.	Identify opportunities to communicate with residents on topics of town-wide interest. Utilize media that may include: newsletters, the town Web site, tax bills and/or other mass mailings, fliers and newspaper inserts.	●	●	●	●							
	Intermunicipal Initiatives											
428.	Monitor and work with the village to improve environmental conditions and impacts to neighbors of the Village Highway Department site.	○	⊙					●1				
429.	Work toward an agreement with the village to address expansion of water supplies and sewer service limited to areas of the town wherein the areas adjacent to the Village envisioned for medium density housing.	●	⊙				○	●1				
430.	Continue to work with the village and Dutchess County to ensure coordination of services and response for disasters and other local emergencies.	⊙						⊙1 ⊙18				
431.	Maintain and improve recycling efforts in the town, and encourage the village to do so, as well.	●						⊙1				
432.	Work with the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority to amend their plan to create a water supply service area along Route 9 in the town.	●						●18				
433.	Require bike racks and amenities for commercial sites, schools, parks and public facilities and Work with the School District to provide bike paths.		●			⊙		●17				
434.	Designate the School District as an Interested Agency in all applications for development that would generate additional school children.		●					⊙17				
435.	Work with the School District to sponsor educational programs to teach school children about the importance of environmental stewardship and about the tools that can be used to clean up and protect the environment.	○				⊙		●17				
436.	Foster opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between the Rhinecliff Fire Department and the Rhinebeck and Hillside departments.	●						⊙12				
437.	Designate Mill Road to Morton Road as part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail.	○				⊙		●8 ●20				

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	Legend: ○ Development/Drafting/Initiate Action ⊙ Review/Administrative Role ● Final Action Note: See page 4.29 for “Other Agency” Legend											
438.	Encourage the School District to incorporate “Ag in the Classroom” in the elementary school and to develop an agricultural/forestry program for the HS.	●				○		○11 ●17				
439.	Work with NY DOT, County DPW, and the town Highway Department and local public utilities to minimize the cutting of street trees.	○			●			●3				
440.	Encourage the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to upgrade stream classifications for protected water bodies in the town.					○						
441.	Develop the Hucklebush Rail Line as a rail-trail, and identify linkages to other land and water based trail networks both in and outside of Rhinebeck.	●	●			○		⊙18				
442.	Foster opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between town and village police, fire, highway and waste management services.	●						●1 ●18				
443.	Work with Amtrak to ensure that the Rhinecliff Train Station continues to function as a local, as opposed to a regional station.	○						○16 ●18				
444.	Work with Metro-North to ensure that they do not establish commuter train service to Rhinebeck in order to avert unmanageable population growth.	○						○16 ●18				
445.	Take advantage of and promote Rhinebeck’s proximity to the Hudson River as a stop on the Blueway Trail from Albany to New York, and as an important part of the Historic District Hike/Bike Trail. Provide facilities for launching canoes and kayaks, and coordinate efforts to encourage the development of bed and breakfasts and small inns in Rhinecliff and other appropriate locations to serve the users of the trails.	●						○13				

Other Agency Legend:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Village of Rhinebeck | 14. Park Committee |
| 2. Comprehensive Plan Committee's Rhinecliff Subcommittee | 15. Town Assessor |
| 3. Dutchess County Department of Public Works and/or New York State Department of Transportation | 16. Rhinecliff Neighborhood Committee* |
| 4. Law Enforcement Agencies | 17. School District |
| 5. Dutchess County Health Department | 18. Other Town and/or State and Local Agencies |
| 6. Town Zoning Enforcement Officer | 19. Economic Development Committee*/ Chamber of Commerce |
| 7. Starr and Morton Libraries | 20. Hudson River Valley Greenway |
| 8. Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development (MPO) | 21. Sign Committee* |
| 9. Town Historian | 22. Northern Dutchess Alliance |
| 10. Land Trusts | 23. Transportation Safety Committee* |
| 11. Open Space/Affordable Housing Committee | 24. Arts & Culture Committee* |
| 12. Fire Departments | 25. Biodiversity Committee |
| 13. Rhinecliff Landing Committee | 26. Recreation Committee |

* Committees to be established

Demographics

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

Today, development pressure in Rhinebeck comes primarily from the south. Since World War II, growth has steadily moved outward from New York City – initially in Westchester, Bergen and Nassau Counties. In the 1960s, as land in those counties was developed, growth moved on to available land in Rockland and Suffolk Counties. Now, growth has moved to a new ring of suburbs, located 45 to 75 miles away from Manhattan. Dutchess County, as well as Orange, Putnam, Ulster and eastern Suffolk Counties, are situated within this ring, and these are the areas that experienced most of the region’s growth in recent decades. While population in the core counties surrounding New York City has either declined or remained substantially unchanged in recent decades, in the counties making up the “outer ring” of the metropolis, population has expanded.

Rural areas such as Rhinebeck have experienced market pressure for residential development from people who work within commuting distance of New York City, and wish to live where open space is still possible. Developers from the metropolitan area are also looking in Dutchess County and elsewhere in the Hudson Valley for lands that are available for development. This trend is expected to continue as people seek a quieter lifestyle and safer environment, and as developers run out of places to carry on their development activities within the suburbs closer to New York City.

POPULATION GROWTH

An understanding of the size and characteristics of a community’s population is a critical part of the planning process. Decisions involving housing, transportation, community facilities and economic development will affect and be affected by the number and characteristics of the people who live in a community.

Rhinebeck experienced rapid growth in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Between 1980 and 2000, the rate of growth subsided. During that time, growth occurred most rapidly in the village of Rhinebeck, which grew 7.2 percent in population from 1980 to 1990, and a 12.9 percent from 1990 to 2000. In comparison, the town (excluding the village) lost three percent of its population between 1990 and 2000. This loss can be attributed to the many IBM employees who lived in the town, and who were either transferred to other locations, left the area, or retired after IBM Kingston closed its facility in the early 1990s.

In two and half years, between April 2000 and July 2003, Rhinebeck’s population increased 6.8 percent, almost double the rate of growth for Dutchess County.

However, between 2000 and July 2003, population in Rhinebeck surged. These events have had a profound impact on residential development in the Hudson Valley as metropolitan residents seek to live in more rural communities. Between 2000 and 2003, the population of the town (excluding the village) increased 6.8 percent, almost double the county rate, as shown in Table 4.1. This rate of change is significant because Dutchess County is one of the fastest growing counties in New York State. Surrounding towns' historic growth is shown in Tables 4.2 and 4.3

**TABLE 4.1: POPULATION GROWTH IN RHINEBECK AND DUTCHESS COUNTY
1950-2003**

	Town of Rhinebeck*		Village of Rhinebeck		Dutchess County	
	Population	Percent Change Over Prior Decade	Population	Percent Change Over Prior Decade	Population	Percent Change Over Prior Decade
1950	1,823		1,923		136,781	
1960	2,519	38.2	2,093	8.8	176,008	28.7
1970	3,322	31.9	2,336	11.6	222,295	26.3
1980	4,520	36.1	2,542	8.8	245,055	10.2
1990	4,833	6.9	2,725	7.2	259,462	5.9
2000	4,685	-3.1	3,077	12.9	280,150	8.0
July 2003	5,004	6.8**	3,114	1.2**	290,885	3.8**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. July 2003 data are Census estimates.

*Excludes village.

** Percent change from 2000 to July 2003.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2003 data are Census estimates.

TABLE 4.2: HISTORIC POPULATION CHANGE: RHINEBECK AND NEIGHBORING TOWNS 1950-2003

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003
Rhinebeck*	3,746	4,612	5,658	7,062	7,558	7,762	8,118
Red Hook*	4,219	6,023	7,548	8,351	9,565	10,408	10,990
Milan	806	944	1,322	1,668	1,895	2,356	2,527
Clinton	1,233	1,639	2,604	3,394	3,760	4,010	4,168
Hyde Park	6,136	12,681	16,910	20,768	21,230	20,851	21,055

*Town data includes villages.

TABLE 4.3: HISTORIC RATES OF CHANGE, RHINEBECK* AND NEIGHBORING TOWNS* 1900-2003

	Percent Change in Population					
	Rhinebeck	Red Hook	Milan	Clinton	Hyde Park	Dutchess County
1950-1960	23.1	42.8	17.1	32.9	106.7	28.7
1960-1970	22.7	25.3	40.0	58.9	33.3	26.3
1970-1980	24.8	10.6	26.2	30.3	22.8	10.2
1980-1990	7.0	14.5	13.6	10.8	2.2	5.9
1990-2000	2.7	8.8	24.3	6.6	-1.8	8.0
2000-2003	4.6	5.6	7.3	3.9	1.0	3.8
1950-2003	116.7	160.5	213.5	238.0	243.1	112.7

*Town data includes villages.

POPULATION DENSITY

Population density provides a measure of the number of people per area of land. It is also a means that New York State uses to determine whether a community can be classified as rural or urban. The New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources designates 150 persons-per-square-mile as the threshold for a “rural” town.

Population density indicates that Rhinebeck is nearing the threshold for classification as a “rural” community and is becoming more suburban.

The population densities among the communities surrounding Rhinebeck vary considerably, as shown in Table 4.4, below. Density is most concentrated in the village centers, consistent with the region’s historic settlement pattern. Only three Northern Dutchess communities – Milan, Clinton and Rhinebeck (excluding the village) – currently qualify as “rural” towns according to the New York State designation. In two-and-a half years, between

April 2000 and July 2003, Rhinebeck’s density increased from 135 persons-per square-mile to 144 persons. The town is nearing the threshold for designation as a “rural” community. With a 4.4 percent increase in population (from 5,004 persons to 5,225 persons), Rhinebeck is well on its way to becoming a more suburban community.

**TABLE 4.4: POPULATION DENSITY: RHINEBECK, NEIGHBORING TOWNS,
DUTCHESS COUNTY
1980-2003**

Municipality	Square Miles	Population Per Square Mile			
		1980	1990	2000	2003
Town of Rhinebeck*	34.64	130	140	135	144
Village of Rhinebeck	1.62	1,569	1,682	1,899	1,922
Town of Red Hook*	33.87	176	199	220	270
Village of Red Hook	1.08	1,567	1,661	1,671	1,697
Milan	36.10	46	52	65	70
Clinton	38.46	88	98	104	108
Hyde Park	36.96	562	574	564	570
Dutchess County	801.66	306	324	349	363

Source: Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development.

* Excludes village(s).

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The distribution of population by age groups in Rhinebeck is important to determine which services will be needed in the future. Consistent with the national and statewide trends, the number of elderly residents in Rhinebeck is increasing as a percentage of total population¹, while the percentage of school age children is declining. In 1970, 15.2 percent of Rhinebeck residents were 65 and older. By 2000, this percentage had increased to 22.8 percent. The aging of Rhinebeck's population is reflected in the median age of Rhinebeck residents, which rose dramatically from 37.2 percent in 1970, to 44.1 years in 2000. This is significantly higher than the county's median age of 36.7 years, and the nation's of 35.3 years. Three nursing home facilities located in Rhinebeck may contribute to the town's higher median age. Table 4.5 compares the age distribution of Rhinebeck residents in 1990 and 2000, and Table 4.6 compares median age and average family size for Rhinebeck in 1990 and 2000.

National trends for smaller family size and higher median age are reflected in Rhinebeck, as well as in Dutchess County as a whole. These trends are expected to be long term.

¹ According to the 2000 Census, one in five Americans is currently older than 55.

TABLE 4.5: RHINEBECK* AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1990 AND 2000

	1990		2000		Numerical Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 5	413	5.4	323	4.2	-90
5 to 9	430	5.6	409	5.3	-21
10 to 14	464	6.2	515	6.6	51
15 to 19	479	6.3	481	6.2	2
20 to 24	388	5.2	296	3.8	-92
25 to 34	1,073	14.2	804	10.4	-269
35 to 44	1,121	14.8	1,167	15	46
45 to 54	843	11.2	1,192	15.4	349
55 to 59	354	4.7	461	5.9	107
60 to 64	363	4.8	342	4.4	-21
65 to 74	695	9.2	685	8.7	-10
75 to 84	550	7.3	656	8.5	106
85 and over	385	5.1	431	5.6	46
TOTAL	7,558	100	7,762	100	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

* Town data includes village.

Also consistent with the statewide demographic pattern is a decrease in the percentage of young people. In 1970, persons 35 and under comprised 52 percent of the total population in Rhinebeck. By 2000, this percentage had declined to 36.5 percent. Within this group, the number of school age children declined from 18.7 percent in 1970 to 11.9 percent in 2000². The decline in the number of young people reflects the nation-wide trend toward smaller families.

On the other hand, the number of “baby boomers” born between 1946 and 1964 increased from 23 percent of the total population in 1990 to 29 percent in 2000³. As the baby boom generation enters retirement in the next 10 to 20 years, it will create additional needs for services for senior citizens, such as affordable housing, smaller housing units, access to community services and public transportation. Baby boomers represent the largest segment of the town’s population, and will have a strong voice in setting the community’s priorities in the future.

² Children ages 5 to 14 only are included as school age children in this calculation in order to compare recent data with 1970 Census data.

³ These percentages are approximate. Since the Census data does not break the 35 to 45 year category into five-year increments, the percentages in that age category were halved to estimate the percentage of population aged 40 to 59.

TABLE 4.6: MEDIAN AGE AND AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE, RHINEBECK*

	1990	2000
Median Age	40.0 years	44.1 years
Average Family Size	2.94 persons	2.87 persons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. * Town data includes village.

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as “*a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage or adoption, and residing together.*” According to the census, there were 3,001 households in the Rhinebeck (including the village) in 2000, of which 1,799 met the Census Bureau definition of families. The remainder were either single-person households or were composed of individuals who were unrelated, or whose relationship were not encompassed in the Census Bureau definitions of household. Persons in group quarters, such as in congregate care facilities and boarding schools, totaled 1,089. This represents 14 percent of the population, more than double the county average of 6.5 percent. The average family size in Rhinebeck declined from 2.94 persons in 1980 to 2.87 persons in 2000.

Reflecting the county trend, population has become slightly more diverse in Rhinebeck since 1990, with a 4.6 percent decrease in the number of Whites, and slight increases in the number of Blacks, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and those of “other race.” The percentage of persons of Hispanic origin increased from 2.04 percent in 1990 to 3.93 percent in 2000. However, the vast majority (91 percent) of Rhinebeck residents are White. This figure is higher than the county as a whole (84 percent). Racial breakdown for Rhinebeck, neighboring towns and Dutchess County is summarized in Table 4.7.

TABLE 4.7: RACIAL BREAKDOWN: RHINEBECK, NEIGHBORING TOWNS*, AND COUNTY, 1990 AND 2000

	Percent White		Percent Black		Percent Native American		Percent Asian/Pacific Islander		Percent Other		Percent Hispanic**	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Rhinebeck	95.54	91.16	2.96	4.72	0.07	0.04	0.89	1.52	0.54	1.20	2.04	3.93
Red Hook	95.95	93.66	1.37	1.79	0.17	0.07	2.16	2.47	0.35	0.54	1.55	2.39
Milan	97.73	95.50	1.48	1.36	0.37	0.64	0.26	0.46	0.16	0.72	2.53	2.42
Clinton	97.40	96.03	1.38	1.60	0.08	0.35	0.82	1.02	0.32	0.22	1.97	1.75
Hyde Park	93.37	91.02	4.33	4.25	0.08	0.20	1.71	1.47	0.51	1.19	1.84	3.23
Dutchess County	88.33	83.66	8.40	9.32	0.14	0.22	2.25	2.55	0.88	2.37	3.76	6.45

Source: US Census Bureau. 2000 figures are based on corrected counts and were compiled by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development. Percentages may add to more than 100 percent since individuals may report more than one race. * Town data includes villages.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

In 2000, the median household income in the town and village of Rhinebeck was \$52,679, which was slightly lower than the median household income in Dutchess County (\$53,086). However, incomes for both households and families have been increasing at a greater rate in Rhinebeck than in the county, as shown in Table 4.8. Three percent of Rhinebeck families were below the poverty level in 1999, as compared with five percent in the county as a whole. The unemployment rate in Rhinebeck was 4.9 percent, compared with 3.6 percent in Dutchess County.

Rhinebeck is a well-established, predominately middle-income community with a high level of educational attainment.

Thirty-nine percent of Rhinebeck residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 86.6 percent are high school graduates or higher, indicating a well-educated population. As shown in Table 4.9, Rhinebeck residents are better educated than those in Dutchess County, New York State and the nation.

TABLE 4.8: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY INCOME, 1990 AND 2000

	Household Income		Change 1990-2000	Family Income		Change 1990-2000
	1990	2000		1990	2000	
Rhinebeck*	\$37,235	\$52,679	41.5%	\$46,766	\$67,837	45.1%
Dutchess County	\$42,250	\$53,086	25.6%	\$49,305	\$63,254	28.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. * Town data includes village.

TABLE 4.9: PERCENT EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2000

	High School Graduate or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Rhinebeck	86.6	38.9
Dutchess County	84.0	27.6
New York State	79.1	27.4
United States	80.4	24.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. * Town data includes village.

Rhinebeck residents favor occupations in management, professional and related occupations (49.9 percent), sales and office occupations (22.5 percent), and service occupations (13.4 percent). Farming and forestry occupations comprised only one percent. Within individual industry classifications, the largest percentage of workers was employed in the educational, health and social services industry (32.1 percent), likely as a result of the hospital located in Rhinebeck. The mean travel time to work for Rhinebeck residents was 27.9 minutes, compared with 29.8 minutes for county residents as a whole.

TABLE 4.10: PERCENT EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, 2000

	Rhinebeck	Dutchess County
Management, professional and related occupations	49.9	48.4
Service occupations	13.4	15.6
Sales and office occupations	22.5	25.3
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.1	0.4
Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations	8.9	10.1
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	5.3	10.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 4.11: PERCENT EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, RHINEBECK AND DUTCHESS COUNTY 2000

	Rhinebeck	Dutchess County
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.9	1.0
Construction	8.4	6.8
Manufacturing	5.6	12.3
Wholesale trade	1.5	2.5
Retail trade	12.0	11.4
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	2.6	4.9
Information	3.8	3.3
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	6.6	5.9
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	9.5	9.1
Education, health and social services	32.1	26.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7.0	6.3
Other services (except public administration)	5.6	4.6
Public administration	4.4	5.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Land Use

Rhinebeck is a town characterized by historical charm, engaging scenery, and abundant rural landscapes. Maintaining Rhinebeck's quaintness and bucolic nature is an important component of The Rhinebeck Plan. Throughout recent years, Rhinebeck has been able to largely prevent expansive suburban sprawl and wishes to continue this trend. Allowing reasonable growth without damaging the Town's attractive qualities is a main component of Rhinebeck's vision for future land use.

EXISTING LAND USE

There are a variety of land uses and land use patterns that contribute to Rhinebeck's unique character. In general the town consists of low-density residential uses interspersed by a number of open fields and agricultural uses. This overall rural character of the Town is also complemented by various commercial uses and some areas of higher density residential development in and around the Rhinecliff and the Village of Rhinebeck.

Residential Development

Residential uses are scattered throughout the Town amongst various agricultural uses, farmlands, and open fields. Overall residential density in the Town is less than 150 persons per square mile which classifies the Town as a rural community¹.

As shown in the Centers and Green Space Plan in Figure 5.1, the Village of Rhinebeck and the Hamlet of Rhinecliff are the two prominent higher density centers within the Town. Although land use within the Village of Rhinebeck is not considered by this plan, the Town recognizes the important role of the Village as a commercial and residential center. The Hamlet of Rhinecliff, and, to a lesser degree, other hamlets such as Rock City, Wey's Corners, Hillside, Sepasco, Eighthmyville, and Wurtemberg, provide evidence of historic land use patterns with compatible uses on smaller lots. All of the hamlets within the Town currently consist of primarily residential development, but a small amount of commercial space also exists within the hamlets of Wey's Corners, Rhinecliff, Rock City, and Hillside.

Rhinecliff is the largest of the Town's hamlets. Rhinecliff's position atop cliffs along the Hudson River provides scenic vistas of the Catskill Mountains, the historic Rondout section of Kingston, and Port Ewen across the river. Rhinecliff is also the site of an Amtrak train station, a small Chinese restaurant, a post office, public library, and a volunteer firehouse.

Commercial Development

Aside from the small stores and restaurants in the Village of Rhinebeck, commercial development within the Town of Rhinebeck has been focused along the Route 9 corridor and Route 9G north of the Village. Establishments along Route 9 include the Stop & Shop grocery store, William's Lumber, several auto related uses, a bank, a small plaza of stores and offices, a pet supply store, and a nursery/florist which are located approximately 1 mile north of the Village Center. The Dutchess County Fairgrounds which periodically draws in large crowds for various events, most notably the Dutchess County Fair held every August, is also located along Route 9 between the Village and Stop & Shop. At the intersection of Routes 9 and 9G there are several car dealerships, gas stations, a self storage center, and other small businesses, including a restaurant. Minimal commercial development has occurred along Route 308 east of the Village where commercial uses are generally limited to professional office space.

EXISTING ZONING

The Town of Rhinebeck is divided into three residential and six non-residential zoning districts as shown in Figure 5.2. The residential districts in the Town - R1A, R3A, and R5A - essentially provide for 1, 3, and 5 acre residential lots. Recent development trends have proven that this zoning configuration does not adequately meet the goals of The Rhinebeck Plan or the previous 1989 Comprehensive Plan. Build-out under the current Zoning Law would result in the town eventually reaching 300 persons per square mile, more than double the density (of 150 persons per square mile) New York State has set for a rural community.

Residential Districts

The majority of the area currently mapped for 1 acre zoning was planned for development under the assumption that municipal services from the Village of Rhinebeck would be extended to the area. As indicated in the zoning text, the 1 acre zoning district was established with the intention of allowing more concentrated medium density development that could potentially be served by municipal water and sewer service. Since sewer and water service were never extended to the area, the 1 acre zoning district is generally considered inappropriate for advancing the goals of the Town of Rhinebeck.

The existing 3 acre zoning district (R3A) was created with the intention of preserving rural character in important areas by allowing only low density residential development, even though the physical character of the land and proximity to travel routes made the location favorable for development. The existing 3 acre zoning still allows development at densities that are too high to support the Town's goal of maintaining its rural character at a density below 150 persons per square mile. As discussed in the Build-Out Analysis (Appendix 2) and summarized below, the 3 Acre zoning would still allow for construction of approximately 1,933 new dwelling units even considering some of the significant environmental constraints in the eastern section of Town.

One area of primary concern within the Town is the area currently zoned R5A for 5 acre residential development. The 5 acre zoning covers some of Rhinebeck's renowned scenic and Historic Districts. The district was created with the intention of allowing limited residential development in an effort to preserve the sense of openness in the Town's scenic and agricultural areas and respect the environmental sensitivity and aesthetic quality of these lands. As a result of increasing development pressures and as indicated in the Build-Out Analysis (Appendix 2), the 5 acre zoning was found to lack the necessary elements to meet the Town's goals. For example, much of the area north of the Village, between River Road and Route 9 is characterized by wetlands, steep topography, prime agricultural soils, or soils considered as

limiting factors for septic systems. Recent experience has shown that development within the R5A district is limited more by the environmental constraints than by the minimum lot size. Similarly, many of the areas along the Hudson River Shoreline are largely undeveloped and characterized by historic estates and scenic areas such as the “Estates District” Scenic area of Statewide Significance. In these areas, even the 5 acre zoning district could potentially allow for significant land use changes to take place that would alter the character of Rhinebeck and adversely affect the historic and scenic resources.

Non-Residential Districts

The non-residential districts include the Highway Business Park District (HBP), Rhinecliff Business District (RB), Gateway District (G), General Business District (GB), Highway Business District (HB), and Office Research Park (ORP). These non-residential districts allow for commercial development at various intensities. Generally speaking, the existing non-residential districts in the Town are appropriately located for some commercial development. However, there is a need to amend the use regulations to prevent commercial development that would be incompatible with the overall character of the Town or particular neighborhood in which non-residential zoning districts are mapped.

BUILD-OUT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

A build-out analysis was conducted to project how much development could occur on undeveloped or underutilized properties and what the impact of that development on community services and the environment might be. The results of this analysis indicate that maintaining existing zoning would not meet several of the goals of the Rhinebeck Plan, specifically the goals set forth for protection of community character and open space and the provision of opportunities for affordable housing.

Appendix 2 contains a full description of the build-out analysis. The following summary highlights the key findings. In 2003, the Town of Rhinebeck had a population of 5,004; however, at full build-out, the population could jump to 14,785. The 9,781 additional residents, including 1,528 school children, would require ten new paid police officers and ten paid fire fighters, new town facilities and more classrooms and other space to accommodate the additional school children. More than 3,400 additional septic disposal systems, generating about 1.6 million gallons of sewage per day discharged to the ground would be needed, considering residential needs, and the additional dwellings would add more than 3,400 new groundwater wells. There would be more than 1,486 acres of impervious surfaces, like roads, driveways, and structures (7% of the town’s remaining undeveloped land area). Projected vehicle trips in the town, estimated to be more than 34,000 additional trips per day by an additional 6,800 vehicles on the roads, would be made to or through the village, on Route 308, Route 9, Route 9G and other roads.

The build-out analysis only examined what would happen if the town were built out with single-family homes. However, Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and Planned Residential Developments (PRD), which are currently encouraged in the Zoning Law, could create large-scale developments almost anywhere in Rhinebeck that could nearly double build-out compared to single-family homes. Under current zoning, density bonuses are available to developers who construct central water and sewer facilities for new subdivisions, who build PRDs, or construct other specific types of permitted development. Because PRDs and PUDs were not incorporated into the build-out analysis, the analysis understates the amount and scale of new development that would be permissible under current zoning.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The future pattern of land use and the community character of the Town of Rhinebeck will be significantly affected by the regulatory land use decisions made in the near term. The Rhinebeck Plan outlines an alternative approach to guiding future development that would achieve more of the Town's goals with respect to preservation of community character, protection of natural and historic resources, provision of open space, and creation of opportunities for new affordable housing. The main components, or concepts, of potential zoning strategies are laid out below. The actual mapping of new zoning districts and establishment of regulations governing permitted uses and dimensional standards (as well as the procedural practices for reviewing land development applications) would occur as part of the process of developing Zoning and other local laws and regulations to implement the Rhinebeck Plan.

The Rhinebeck Plan recommends a multi-tiered approach to amending the Town's land development regulations that relies on balancing higher-density uses in "Priority Growth Areas" with lower density uses or land conservation in other areas to preserve the overall character of the community. The concept of Priority Growth Areas is consistent with the overall "Centers and Greenspace" vision for the Town. This vision would preserve significant tracts of greenspace and focus growth near existing centers and in smaller clusters. Figures 5.3 and 5-4 identify the zoning districts that contribute to this balanced development pattern. This multi-tiered approach was developed based upon the results of a land suitability analysis that was performed as part of the comprehensive planning process that identified key environmental constraints as well as the opportunities for preservation of key scenic and historic resources also identified during the comprehensive planning process.

Land Suitability Analysis

Design with Nature, written by the pre-eminent planner Ian McHarg and first published in 1969, laid the groundwork for the emergence of geographic information systems (GIS) and environmental planning now used today. Stewart Udall has said, "No living American has done more to usher the gentle science of ecology out of oblivion and into mainstream thought than Ian McHarg – a teacher, philosopher, designer, and activist who changed the way we view and shape our environment." McHarg's method of multidisciplinary-based suitability analysis proved to be the foundation of many of the complex analyses and reports performed with GIS today and reflected in design principles espoused by others such as Randall Arendt, author of *Rural by Design* and other works.

A land suitability analysis following McHarg's principles was performed for The Rhinebeck Plan. A sequential series of maps was developed for the Plan, beginning with a base map containing cultural features, property boundaries and municipal boundaries. Then, the process of overlaying such environmental features as wetlands, floodplains, slopes, prime and state-wide important agricultural soils, aquifers and water resources like streams and ponds, was accomplished. The individual resource and combined constraints mapping are shown in Chapter 8. These maps, and additional information on cultural resources such as scenic and historic districts, were used by the Comprehensive Plan Committee to identify lands and resources to be protected and potential locations for priority growth areas.

Land Conservation Districts

Lands determined to be of the highest value for conservation based on the Land Suitability Analysis should be protected through a specific Zoning district that recognizes their ecological fragility or importance. The Town already has a Land Conservation (LC) district that is intended to provide for conservation, open space, and limited recreational use of the Town's most ecologically-sensitive lands, including those most closely related to the principal watercourses

throughout the Town. There are a number of additional properties, as discussed under the Visions, Objectives, and Actions below that can be added to the LC District to preserve land, including many properties owned by the town with ecological, recreational, or historic significance. The Rhinebeck Plan also identifies the Hucklebush Railroad bed as a possible new LC-T district to recognize its potential future use as a public trail. The Hucklebush trail has been identified as a potential public resource in the Town's 1989 Comprehensive Plan and a portion of the trail is included in the New York State Greenway Map.

Priority Growth Areas

The Comprehensive Plan Committee identified a number of "Priority Growth Areas" as a way of ensuring that the principles of "Smart Growth" are implemented throughout the Town and as a potential method for achieving needed affordable housing. Implicit in the Smart Growth concept is that higher-intensity development in the Priority Growth Areas would be balanced by lower-intensity development outside the Priority Growth Areas (see below).

As the Comprehensive Plan evolved, a number of locations throughout the Town were considered as potential Priority Growth Areas. The overarching principle used to identify Priority Growth Areas was to seek a balance between potential environmental impacts of development, advantageous location, and benefits to the Town that helped achieve the Town's goals set forth throughout this document.

The Rhinebeck Plan identifies (1) Hamlet Infill development; (2) Neighborhood Districts and (3) Mandatory Conservation subdivision as the most appropriate tools for achieving development that is consistent with the "Priority Growth Areas" and "Centers and Greenspace" concepts.

Hamlet Infill Development

The Town of Rhinebeck includes several historic hamlets that can incorporate additional development consistent with the character of the hamlet and surrounding areas. The Rhinebeck Plan recommends that a hamlet infill zoning strategy should be developed for the hamlets of Rock City and Sepasco. A separate zoning strategy should also be developed for the hamlet of Rhinecliff that recognizes the unique nature of this built-out area. Within these hamlets, strategies for permitting adaptive reuse of existing structures or new single-family, two-family, or multi-family structures and/or provisions for accessory dwelling units should be explored to allow for the natural growth of these areas and the provision of necessary affordable housing. Residential densities of up to 4 dwelling units per acre could be considered here so long as hamlet design principles are maintained and adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities exist. Limited commercial development could also be considered within hamlet infill areas.

Neighborhood Districts

Neighborhood Districts should be considered on undeveloped or underdeveloped lands adjacent to the Village of Rhinebeck. These districts could be similar to existing zoning densities within the Village and in existing adjoining neighborhoods in the Town. Development of these parcels, it is assumed, could take advantage of existing water and wastewater infrastructure. Development within the Neighborhood Districts would be at approximately 8 dwelling units per acre (minimum of 6,000 square feet per lot) to match the prevailing pattern of existing development in these areas. Within those areas, the predominant use would be single-family dwellings, but some amount of two-family and multi-family residential would be permitted to increase the potential for providing affordable housing.

To be considered for application of the Neighborhood Extension zoning, lands should be in close proximity to the Village of Rhinebeck to promote walkability and should have access to existing public water supply and wastewater treatment collection infrastructure.

Conservation Subdivision

Conservation Subdivision, as described in further detail below, allows for the Centers and Greenspace concept to be employed on a more localized and site specific level. This concept results in development on a parcel being “centralized” or clustered in specific locations while preserving significant tracts of greenspace on surrounding lands. Under this concept, the most appropriate locations for development on a parcel are identified during the site plan process. These decisions would follow overall guidance described throughout this Plan.

Rural Residential Development

Lands outside of the Priority Growth Areas not identified for outright preservation in the Land Conservation Zoning district, would be governed by one or more Zoning districts within which single-family residential conservation development is the principal form of new use but which could also support other residential and non-residential uses by Special use Permit. Agriculture, forestry, and other rural uses should continue to be considered permitted principal uses in these districts.

In stark contrast to existing Zoning provisions, which mandate a pattern of development commonly referred to as “sprawl,” the Rhinebeck Plan calls for application of “conservation subdivision” within the Rural Residential areas. The Conservation Subdivision regulations and procedures include the provision for mandatory preservation of a percentage of the overall land area and for protection of identified primary (e.g., wetlands, steep slopes) and secondary (e.g., stone walls, hedgerows) conservation features. This pattern results in greater preservation of contiguous areas of open space, greater protection of natural systems that do not follow property boundaries, greater protection of scenic and historic resources, and greater protection of the Town’s overall rural character.

Conservation Subdivisions provide landowners with a flexible approach to subdivision design, so that the dwelling units can be concentrated on a smaller portion of their land, allowing most of the land to be left in its natural open space condition. Conservation Subdivisions promote the wise use of land, create more efficient street and utility patterns than conventional subdivisions, and preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open land. Conservation Subdivision represents one facet of “smart growth,” and is a viable alternative to conventional subdivision, which will ultimately produce nothing more than house lots and streets.

Conservation Subdivision is achieved in a density-neutral manner by designing neighborhoods more compactly than conventional subdivision. Clustering homes, rather than allowing them to sprawl throughout the town, creates a more attractive and pleasing environment; studies have shown such subdivisions sell more easily and appreciate faster than conventional “house lot-and-street” developments. Furthermore, Conservation Subdivisions are consistent with the town’s long term planning goals, as established in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan to preserve open space, rural character and wildlife habitats, and to protect water quality.

The recommended approach to designing Conservation Subdivisions is use of a simple four-step design process that identifies areas that have the greatest natural and scenic qualities so as to incorporate them into the areas to be preserved as permanent open space (either publicly or privately owned). The most important step in the design process is to identify the land that is to be preserved, such as wetlands, water bodies, floodplains, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils, woodlands, critical wildlife habitats, and sites of historic, cultural and archaeological significance. Portions of the site that are not constrained by these features become the potential development

areas. Calculations are made to determine the number of dwellings allowed by zoning on the site in the same way that a conventional subdivision lot count is determined.

The permissible number of dwelling units and roads are then located around the unbuildable portion of the parcel in a manner that permanently preserves significant open space. This open space can be farmlands, wood lots, meadows, recreational, and other areas. The Rhinebeck Plan recommends that this technique form the basis for changes to the town Zoning Law provisions for “Conservation Subdivisions.” An illustrative example of the four-step design process used to create a Conservation Subdivision is shown below. This process reverses the sequence of steps normally used in designing a conventional subdivision.

EXAMPLE OF CLUSTER SUBDIVISION

Figures A and B illustrate a subdivision resulting from conventional large-lot zoning. Each lot is of nearly uniform size, resulting in the consumption of large amounts of open space and fragmentation of green space and wildlife habitat.

Figure A

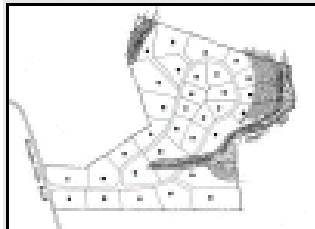
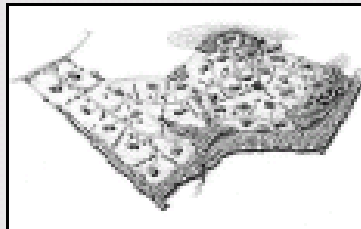


Figure B



Figures C and D illustrate a subdivision resulting from conservation principles. The same number of lots (i.e., density) is achieved on the parcel, but houses are on smaller lots, nearer to the roadway, and they are not spread out across the entire parcel. The lots are platted in a way to ensure a common open space and connected green spaces. In the case of a conservation subdivision on existing farmland, lots would be placed on the least productive agricultural areas of the parcel and the core of the farmland would be conserved.

Figure C

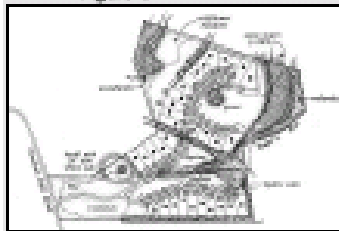
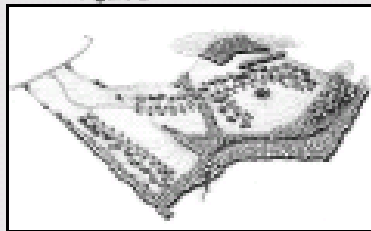


Figure D



It is also possible to allow for a density increase in cluster subdivisions to facilitate the creation of affordable housing while at the same time fostering the preservation of open space or farmland. For example, allowing additional single-family homes on smaller lots over and above the base density where one of the additional units is restricted to occupants by low and moderate-income households.

Images from Aneesh, R., M. Harper, National Lands Trust, American Planning Association, and American Society of Landscape Architects. 1996. Conservation design for subdivisions: A practical guide to creating open space networks. Washington, DC: Island Press.

ADULT USES

Adult uses are essentially self-defined as any enterprises that exclude minors, or which are required by law to do so, in order to allow the sale of sexually related materials or services in one form or another. Examples of adult businesses include adult bookstores, adult video and/or novelty stores, topless/bottomless bars, adult hotels and motels, adult movie theaters, escort agencies, massage parlors, peep shows, and the like.

Under Law, the content of the materials or services offered by these businesses is not subject to regulation. Any recommendations of The Rhinebeck Plan, concerning land use regulations that should be considered by the town, are not directed to the adult content of those materials or services. The Plan recognizes that such content may be constitutionally protected. Instead, the secondary effects that such businesses could have on the residents of the town and the character of Rhinebeck's neighborhoods, often referred to as "secondary impacts," is of concern.

Numerous studies, conducted by a wide variety of municipal planning departments across the nation, have found a direct relationship between the presence of adult uses in a neighborhood and such secondary adverse effects as increased crime rates and depreciated property values. Local governments have used land use controls, based on such studies, to regulate the locations of adult uses in order to minimize such secondary effects and the courts have sanctioned the use of land use regulations that are directed at those secondary impacts.

The Plan evaluated concerns with regard to the secondary adverse impacts that may result if adult uses were established within the town, and makes recommendations with respect to land use regulations that would avoid or minimize the potential impacts of such uses.

Currently, there are no lawfully existing adult businesses within the town and none are known to have existed within the town in the past. However, adult uses are appearing with increasing frequency in Hudson Valley communities and numerous studies demonstrate the impacts of adult uses on the community.

Each and every study of sexually oriented businesses that has been reviewed for The Plan has identified serious potential adverse impacts with such uses in a number of areas including crime, neighborhood character, quality of life, and property values. If Rhinebeck wishes to avoid such secondary impacts, it should severely limit or consider restricting the location of sexually oriented businesses in the town away from sensitive areas such as schools, libraries, parks and other areas where children may gather. If such steps are not taken, there is the potential for the town's quality of life to suffer irreparable damage.

VISION PLAN

Vision: The Town's rural, scenic, natural and historic character should be protected by integrating development into priority growth areas, existing hamlets and the Village and enhancing protection of community character through conservation design practices in the rural portions of the Town.

Rhinebeck is renowned for its scenic beauty and bucolic open spaces, rural and historic character and outstanding quality of life. The town is also known for the care it takes to ensure that its nationally recognized resources are protected and preserved. We cannot preserve all remaining unprotected lands as open space, nor preserve, all at once, those lands which we can; however, in accordance with the mandate of an overwhelming majority of Rhinebeck residents, we must find ways to protect as many remaining open space lands as are necessary to maintain Rhinebeck's rural character, quality of life, scenic resources and natural environment.

No one can predict future events, but the town's eventual build-out will mean that at some time in the future, town residents and officials will be faced with whether to pursue a "no-growth" strategy or to pursue up-zoning to accommodate even further growth. The reality is that zoning changes recommended in this Plan may only be short-term measures, changeable in the future. To minimize this possibility, permanent measures such as conservation easements should be used in all instances recommended in The Rhinebeck Plan to avoid the long-term excessive costs of providing public services and infrastructure to accommodate isolated and dispersed pockets of denser development. The defining concept of The Rhinebeck Plan is to accommodate a modest amount of growth while keeping available a base of land for rural uses and maintain an overall population density at or below 150 people per square mile.

Objective: The Town's local zoning, subdivision, environmental regulations, and site plan and subdivision review practices should be modified to better maintain and enhance the quiet, rural character of the town, to avert traffic congestion and sprawl.

Actions:

1. Revise the Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations to reflect The Rhinebeck Plan's vision of preserving the character of the town, using Smart Growth Audit results as a guide.
2. Adopt a "Smart Growth Map," identifying both "development zones" and "protection zones" in the town to identify the overall vision of the Rhinebeck Plan (see Figure 5.1).
3. Alter zoning densities to prevent a continuation of sprawl and to help preserve historic and rural character, open space and natural resources.
4. Guide new development to account for existing environmental constraints and existing and prospective municipal or municipally approved and operated central water and sewer.
5. Prepare criteria and procedures for establishing priority growth areas that incorporate the principles of conservation developments in specifically designated locations to allow for the overall character of the Town to be maintained while enhancing walkability around the Village and Hamlets.
6. Establish a smart growth initiative in the town by adopting sound planning principles, among others, as follows:
 - Preserve and foster Rhinebeck's distinctive sense of place.
 - Strengthen and direct new development toward areas of existing development.
 - Preserve open space, farmland natural beauty and environmental quality.
 - Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
7. Consider developing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program in accordance with §261-a of NYS Town Law to facilitate transfer of development rights from rural areas into priority growth areas or between large land holdings within the RA10 or HP20 Zoning Districts.

Objective: Amend the Town’s Zoning Law and Map to reflect the Goals and Objectives of the Rhinebeck Plan with respect to guiding new development.

Actions:

1. Identify Priority Growth Areas in close proximity to the Village of Rhinebeck and existing hamlets to facilitate development of new walkable neighborhoods. Allow mixed-use development in these areas as appropriate given the existing scale and character. Define permitted and Special Permit uses within the Priority Growth Areas to allow for protection of community character.
 - ✓ Work with Rhinecliff residents to create amendments to the Zoning Law and Map to recognize the hamlet’s unique historic and scenic qualities by requiring site plan and special use permit approval to expand either the intensity or the density of existing uses or for authorizing new construction or modifications of existing undeveloped lots.
 - ✓ Amend the Zoning Law and Map to create four new Neighborhood Residential (NR) Zoning Districts where residential density would be permitted at 6,000 square feet per dwelling contingent on community water and sewer with suitable buffers to preserve natural resources and views: (1) on the parcel immediately west of the village and north of Rhinecliff Road (State Route 308/County Route 85) within walking distance of the Village center, that is currently zoned R1A (Village Gateway – VG); (2) the three parcels that comprise the existing trailer park on Route 9 (Neighborhood Residential - NR), currently zoned Highway Business (3) a roughly 3-acre property on Old Post Road near the 90-degree bend in the road; and (4) a Gateway North (Gw-N) zone on an undeveloped 10-acre parcel on the northern border of the Village of Rhinebeck where new residences on 6,000 square-foot lots would transition into the Village’s Gateway Business District.
 - ✓ Amend the Zoning Law and Map to create a new Neighborhood Extension Overlay District to facilitate in-fill development within the existing hamlets of Rock City and Sepasco. Consider permitting single-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings within the overlay district subject to demonstration of sufficient water supply and wastewater treatment capacity. Allow density bonuses within these areas for provision of additional affordable housing, additional open space, or provision of public access to open space.
2. Amend the Zoning Law and Map to create new Rural Residential districts outside of Priority Growth Areas within which overall residential density would be reduced from what is permitted under existing zoning and which would require preservation of significant portions of the land as open space. Residential development within these Rural Residential districts would be governed by principles of open space or conservation subdivision design that would recognize the historic and natural elements of the landscape. Consider creation of provisions for density bonuses within rural areas for provision of additional affordable housing, additional open space, or provision of public access to open space.
 - ✓ Increase the required minimum lot sizes and adjust corresponding bulk requirements in portions of the R5A Zoning District to ten (10) and twenty (20) acres. Re-name the 10-



Landscape in the National Landmark District

- acre zone the Rural Agricultural Zoning District (RA10) and the 20-acre zone the Historic Preservation Zoning District (HP20).
 - ✓ Retain the existing Residential 5-Acre Zoning District (R5A or Residential Low Density RL5) for the residential lots immediately east and south of the hamlet of Rhinecliff along Morton Road.
 - ✓ Expand the existing Residential 1-Acre Zoning District (R1A) for the largely developed residential lots fronting on Rhinecliff Road between the village and hamlet.
 - ✓ Increase the required minimum lot size in the R3A District to five (5) acres, adjust corresponding bulk requirements and re-name this zone the Rural Countryside Zoning District (RC5).
 - ✓ Re-zone the entire R1A District south of the village and east of Route 9 to the new Rural Countryside (RC5) Zoning District.
 - ✓ Re-zone the entire R1A District north of the village and west of Route 9, and portions of the R1A District north of Rhinecliff Road and west of the Village to the new Rural Agricultural-10 (RA10) Zoning District.
 - ✓ Re-zone portions of the R1A District west and southwest of the village and north and south of Rhinecliff Road to the new Rural Agricultural-10 (RA10) Zoning District.
3. Retain limited portions of the Town with 1-Acre zoning to recognize existing residential neighborhoods and to permit limited additional development of a similar scale in these areas.
 4. Amend the Zoning Map to create a new Civic use (CIV) zone and two classifications of Land Conservation Districts: one for properties exhibiting ecological recreational or historic significance that offer public benefits, dedicated as open space in perpetuity, or undeveloped and under the ownership of the town (LC); the other for properties identified in the town's 1989 Open Space Plan and in The Rhinebeck Plan as "Proposed Public Access Trails" (LC-T). The following parcels to be rezoned to CIV, LC, or LC-T are shown on the proposed zoning map:
 - a. Town-owned properties on Stone Church and Pells Roads and other properties that have been dedicated, through the subdivision review process, to municipal recreational or open space use, and other municipal lands such as the former Rhineson property, the town landing, and the village water plant.
 - b. Historic cemetery on Route 9 north of Wey Road and the "Common Ground" parcel north of and adjacent to the cemetery.
 - c. Palatine Farmstead parcel.
 - d. Quitman House parcel.
 - e. Rhinebeck Historical Society parcel on Rhinecliff Road.
 - f. Hucklebush Railroad bed.
 - g. Central Hudson utility corridor parcels/right-of-way.
 - h. Burger Hill Park.
 - i. Lands owned by The Nature Conservancy.
 - j. All coves along the Hudson River.
 - k. Snyder and Vlei swamps.
 - l. Other publicly owned parcels that have been designated for recreational or conservation uses.
 - m. Ferncliff Forest (already in the LC District).
 5. Amend the town's non-residential Zoning districts, as shown on the proposed Zoning Map (see Figure 5.3) and amend the Schedule of Use Regulations to eliminate potentially incompatible uses and to add compatible uses as follows:
 - ✓ Office Research Park (ORP). Rezone the ORP parcels northwest of Middle Road and south of Route 9G to a new Gateway North (Gw-N) District and eliminate the Planned Unit Development Overlay (PUD-O) in this same area. In the Gw-N District, limit

- uses to hotels or offices, require a six-acre minimum lot size and a 200-foot setback from Route 9G, and through design standards, require unified architectural design.
 - ✓ Highway Business (HB). Rename the HB District to the Community Business District and establish two new districts referred to as Community Business North (CB-N) and Community Business South (CB-S). The CB-N consists of the gas station parcel at the intersection of State routes 9G and 199. The CB-S consists of portions of the HB District west of Route 9 south of the Route 9 and 9G intersection.
 - ✓ Highway Business Park (HBP). Rename the HBP along Route 9G to the Business Park (BP) District. Eliminate the HBP District on Route 9 north of the Village and replace it with the CB-S District.
 - ✓ Create a new Crossroads Business District (Cr-B) for several parcels fronting on the State highways in the vicinity of the Routes 9 and 9G intersection and amend the Zoning Law to permit less intensive uses than the current Highway Business District allows.
 - ✓ General Business (GB) and Gateway (G) districts. Retain these districts as they are at present in their current locations but eliminate potentially incompatible uses. Rename the Gateway district to Gateway South (Gw-S) and create a new Gateway East (Gw-E) district at the edge of the Village on Route 308 to recognize an existing commercial use (farm stand) that is in keeping with the character of the Village.
 - ✓ Rhinecliff Business (Rc-B) District. Retain this Zoning district in the core of the hamlet and amend the Zoning map, as recommended by a Subcommittee of hamlet residents.
6. Amend the Zoning Law and Map to create a new Rail Transportation Corridor District (RT) to recognize the importance of the freight and passenger rail corridor along the town's westernmost boundary on the Hudson River and its potential for public trail linkages.
 7. Eliminate the Planned Residential Development District (PRD) and the Planned Unit Development District (PUD) due to the significant increased densities available with these zoning tools and their potential conflicts with the recommended development in priority growth areas.

Objective: The historic character of Rhinecliff should be maintained and enhanced and its architecture and design should be protected and preserved while simultaneously improving hamlet amenities.

Actions:

1. Delineate the area that comprises the hamlet of Rhinecliff and classify this area as a Rhinecliff Overlay.
2. Craft zoning provisions specific to the hamlet.
3. Identify the core of the hamlet as a CEA under SEQR.
4. Ensure that existing hamlet roads are not widened, but rather maintained as rural, country roads.
5. Develop and integrate design standards into the Zoning Law that recognize the uniqueness of the hamlet's architecture and streetscapes, working closely with Rhinecliff residents to do so. Apply the standards to all development and re-development in the hamlet. Include rigorous requirements in the new zoning for consistency of all new development with the hamlet's character, including architectural elements of the vernacular. Apply the requirements to such present, historic architectural characteristics as scale, mass and building form of new buildings. In allowing new development, ensure sympathy with surrounding structures, as follows:
 - ✓ Design to human scale, and utilize a variety of detailed features and patterns, which provide visual interest.

- ✓ Design the height of new buildings to be consistent with that of neighboring buildings
 - ✓ Design roofs to mimic the vernacular architecture. Place windows and doors at regular intervals across the building façade
 - ✓ Utilize traditional building materials
 - ✓ Require consistent setbacks from the street, where feasible
6. Require that all new development in the hamlet be by special use permit, and require the use of performance standards to minimize or avoid impacts on the hamlet.
 7. Require building design that makes the commercial core walkable by creating diverse streetscapes where the ground floor space faces the street, street level retail is appropriate, structures are built to lot lines, and building fronts are made permeable by the placement of doors and windows.
 8. Limit the square footage of new dwellings and the expansion of existing ones to prevent proliferation of oversized, out-of-character homes, maintain the most desirable characteristics of the hamlet and prevent alteration of the historic character of Rhinecliff.
 - a. Prevent the building of second or third story additions proposed for one or two-story buildings, which are out of character with the buildings surrounding them.
 - b. Prevent the building of a large building, built to replace a portion or all of a demolished one, and now out of scale with surrounding buildings.
 - c. Enact a building scale regulation in the Zoning Law which controls the mass of new houses – either by basing the square footage of residential dwellings upon the size of the lot, or by limiting residential building size to a maximum that reflects the size of existing hamlet houses.
 - d. Engage Rhinecliff residents in the development of a single family zoning schedule that requires new homes to be compatible with adjacent homes. Work block by block in the hamlet until all existing dwellings are identified and characterized by size. Consider the appointment of a Committee to carry out and recommend an appropriate zoning schedule. Incorporate the schedule into the Zoning Law to govern expansions and new construction.
 9. Require site plan approval for expansion of existing residential dwellings.
 10. Ensure attractive streetscapes and pedestrian amenities in the hamlet of Rhinecliff: a) Provide pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, landscaping and awnings along sidewalks; b) Provide street furniture, such as benches and trash receptacles; c) Maintain parking as a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles, both on-street and in parking lots; d) Allow outdoor tables for restaurants and cafes; e) Enhance pedestrian street crossings with articulated pavers, bump-outs² or raised crosswalks; f) Provide adequate lighting at each crossing; g) Ensure all crosswalks are delineated with materials that provide day and night visibility; and h) Restore the old stairs at the end of Shatzell Avenue on the town right-of-way.
 11. Plan for the accommodation of automobile traffic in a way where pedestrian comfort and safety are of the utmost importance.



Kip Heermance House

Objective: Develop site plan and subdivision review standards or guidelines to ensure that rural development fits into its natural surroundings, rather than being superimposed as a dominant element in the countryside.

Actions:

1. Expand the Planning Board's responsibilities to include design reviews of new large-scale residential projects. Adopt clear design standards by providing drawings and photographs to illustrate designs that are acceptable to the community, in order to assist developers, design professionals and the Planning and Zoning Boards with the review and approval of projects. Ensure that the standards illustrate site layout for subdivisions (including building envelopes), so that they are designed to fit into their natural surroundings, rather than becoming a dominant element of the rural landscape.
2. Develop standards for non-residential development that include the scale of proposed activities; access and setbacks; signage; lighting; landscaping; pedestrian/bicycle circulation; and the preferred location of parking lots to ensure that a proposed project is in harmony with adjacent properties and does not blemish the rural environment. Emphasize dispersion on a site, in parking lot design, in order to reduce impacts. Disallow parking between the building and the street where feasible.
3. Re-visit the non-residential design guidelines to determine whether they are consistent with The Rhinebeck Plan. Revise the Guidelines, as appropriate.
4. Use the *Greenway Guides D1* through *D4* to revise the Zoning Law, and create design standards to address habitats, stream corridors, highways, and wellhead and aquifer protection.
5. Adopt a common definition of "rural," so that programs and activities can be adjusted to retain Rhinebeck's "rural" classification. The state definition of 150 persons per square mile for the unincorporated areas of the town serves to define "rural" in a numeric manner, while a more easily recognized standard includes adoption of the following definition in The Rhinebeck Plan: "A landscape where the predominant feature is the natural environment, such as open space, farmland, woodlands and water bodies, and where development intrusion is minimal."
6. At the time of the creation of an Open Space and Affordable Housing Board, develop a procedure for Planning Board referral of site plan and subdivision applications to ensure oversight of new development in respect to the Town's efforts to protect open space and create opportunities for the provision of new affordable housing.

Objective: New commercial development along highways in the town should be in keeping with Rhinebeck's scenic and historic character.

Actions:

1. Prohibit strip commercial development in the town by preparing and adopting design standards that mandate: connecting roadways; shared driveways and parking; controlled signage; high-quality landscaping and architecture; and a mix of adjacent uses.

2. Encourage commercial development in clusters, rather than in strip development.
3. Create pedestrian networks and crosswalks for all commercial development and re-development, in order to create connections to shared parking, public transportation and walking between stores and to nearby housing.
4. Consolidate commercial entrances on roads, where possible, and mandate the use of internal service streets as an alternative to them.
5. Unify the streetscape with continuous street trees, and where possible, planted medians, to prevent unlimited left turns.
6. Amend the Zoning Law to incorporate *Greenway Guide E3* on parking, and bring the town's parking requirements into conformance with the *Guide* and the recommendations of such organizations as the National Parking Association and Institute of Transportation Engineers, as follows:
 - a. Adopt additional standards to screen parking lots from roads and adjacent residential uses.
 - b. Regulate their location so that all parking lots are placed to the side or rear of new structures to reduce their visual impact.
 - c. Pay special attention to the recommendations of the National Parking Association, which, when adopted, result in less impervious surfaces, less runoff, and more landscaping opportunity.



Objective: New commercial development should be compatible with the setting, scale and architecture of existing features.

Actions:

1. Expand the town's commercial design guidelines to include all types of new development or re-development, including civic, institutional, large-scale residential and rural (non-farm) development. Incorporate illustrative design standards into the Zoning Law. Subject all new commercial and residential development that will be subject to site plan approval, or as a condition of Planning Board approval, to the design standards.
2. Place limitations on the size of retail buildings to ensure they are at a scale that is in keeping with the community. Individual retail buildings should be the size and scale of the traditional retail businesses in the village center.
3. Facilitate the continuation of local economic activity that serves primarily the needs of residents and does not contradict community character. Use the SEQR process to evaluate:
 - ✓ Potential negative impacts on commercial building vacancy rates and the ensuing blighted structures that may result.

- ✓ Inhibition or loss of other desirable commercial development.
- ✓ Inducing demand for undesirable commercial development and the resulting necessity to modify existing commercial zoning.

Objective: Land uses with the potential to pollute the air, soils, or water should be regulated.

Actions:

1. Re-visit the town's General Performance Standards to ensure they reflect state-of-the-art environmental impact thresholds for potential nuisances that have the potential to pollute the air, soil or water.
2. Examine and improve regulations in the Zoning Law concerning mining activities (extractive operations currently permitted in the R3A District by special use permit), and amend the law to further restrict such activities to existing, active mine sites. Prohibit the placement of new mine sites within the town for following reasons:
 - ✓ Potential disruption to the character of residential areas caused by the heavy industrial characteristics of this land use activity, including associated noise, dust, aesthetics, and traffic;
 - ✓ Concern for the public health, safety and welfare when mining is in close proximity to residences and farms;
 - ✓ Restrict the number and location of areas in the town where mining activities may take place, since the town will not be permitted to enforce local regulations "relating to the extractive mining industry."
3. Amend the Zoning Law to include a section on tree and topsoil removal, grading and excavating which establishes regulations, based on performance standards, for any re-grading of land, and removal of trees or topsoil (with the exception of sustainable forestry management and tree removal to protect infrastructure). Require the Planning Board to implement the regulations during site plan and subdivision approval.

Objective: Develop standards to control excessive noise in commercial and residential zones.

Actions:

1. Revise the acoustic performance standards in the Zoning Law to ensure that they are comprehensive and apply to a broad array of noise sources.
2. Ensure that the standards are specific to each noise type – i.e., that standards for short bursts of noise such as gun shots, for example, are unique and differ from the standards from such continuous noises as air conditioners, for example.
3. Include in the standards at a minimum the following list of noise sources: motorcycles, hot rods, snowmobiles, all-terrain and other recreational vehicles, jet skis, power boats, tour boats, boom boxes, automobile-based music systems, leaf blowers and barking dogs, as well as noises associated with special events and industrial activities.

Objective: Develop standards to control lighting pollution, using Greenway standards as a guide, which will apply to town-wide residential, as well as commercial zones.

Actions:

1. Amend the Zoning Law to include the recommendations of *Greenway Guide E5* on lighting to prevent glare, protect the night sky, and enhance the town's nighttime character. Use the same concepts for public street lighting, as follows:
 - a. Provide adequate illumination for the intended task, averting over-light; utilize standards provided by manufacturers for guidance.
 - b. Use full cutoff light fixtures – i.e., fixtures that emit light only downward, as opposed to upward or horizontally.
 - c. Use high-pressure sodium lighting for street and parking lot lighting. Use metal halide lighting for pedestrian areas, due to its good color representation. Prohibit the use of mercury vapor lighting for any application.
 - d. Light pedestrian areas to human scale – i.e., to a 15-foot maximum height. Light parking lots to a height that does not exceed a 20-foot maximum.
 - e. Light outdoor signs from the top.
 - f. Disallow laser lighting and/or searchlights for advertising applications.
 - g. Consider exceptions to the lighting standards in such instances as temporary sports field lighting and other specialty activities like short-term events and holiday tree lighting.
 - h. In order to enhance the town's nighttime ambience, incorporate lighting standards such as the Illumination Engineering Society and International Dark Sky Association recommendations into the Zoning law.

Objective: Develop standards to control the clutter of commercial signs.

Actions:

1. Prepare an inventory of all existing signs in the town.
2. Amend and enforce the Zoning Law relating to signage, as follows:
 - a. Include more detailed requirements for signage in the Zoning Law, so that it not only regulate signs, but will encourage signs which enhance, rather than detract from, Rhinebeck's rural and scenic character.
 - b. Prohibit the use of self-illuminating signs
 - c. Eliminate billboards – a discordant element in the landscape that often inhibits such investments and improvements. Amend the Zoning Law to amortize existing billboards over a five-year period, at the end of which the nonconforming signs must be removed. In conjunction with billboard removal, establish a town sign program that would be available for local businesses to create off-premises, directional signs under uniform design and standards, much like the sign programs in the Adirondacks and the State of Vermont.
 - d. Amend the Zoning Law's site plan regulations to mandate that the parking of vehicles that display prominent advertising is to be behind buildings, in order to prevent the visual blight created by them.

Objective: Strive to retrofit existing, non-conforming commercial development over time, in order to respect Rhinebeck's small-town character and architectural heritage. Establish creative ways for non-conforming development to respect local character.

Actions:

1. Ensure that non-conforming signs, lighting, landscaping and other site issues that are the subject of Subdivision, special use permit and/or site plan applications, Certificates of Occupancy, No-violation Letters, or other permit, approval, entitlement, or authorization from the town, are brought into compliance (to the greatest extent practicable) with the

terms and conditions of the Zoning Law, as recommended by the Plan. Revise the Zoning to include this requirement.

Objective: Use and maintain state-of-the-art information management techniques to preserve the knowledge generated by the Rhinebeck Plan and to convey that knowledge to key decision-makers and the general public.

Actions:

1. Continue to map the location of lands that comprise significant natural, historic and cultural resources, using the computer-based Geographic Information System (GIS)³ established for The Rhinebeck Plan. Identify permanently protected lands on all mapping. Continuously update the maps as resources are added. Become a clearinghouse for the geographic information collected, and make it available to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, zoning enforcement officer and those wishing to develop land in the town for their review prior to the formulation of their plans. Display the maps at town hall for use by municipal boards, landowners, and prospective applicants for development approval. Make the maps available on the town's website. Ensure the maps are properly labeled to indicate they are reference tools and are not a substitute for on-site analysis during the development approval process.
2. Establish procedures for the electronic submission of development applications, including their SEQR documents (now required by State law), to enable their interactive viewing at review meetings.
3. Instruct town officials in the use of the "Virtual Private Network" (VPN)-enabled computer at Town Hall, so that decision makers have ready access to up-to-date GIS data. Inform residents of the availability of the VPN, so that residents have access to the same information that town officials currently have. If feasible, make the GIS data accessible through the town's Web site.
4. Provide electronic versions of the Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations for viewing and downloading on the Internet.
5. Amend the subdivision regulations to require all applicants for new subdivisions to submit electronic versions of their plans from the most preliminary submittal through subsequent reviews. The electronic submissions should be in a format that allows it to be viewed registered with all other town geographic data.

Objective: Ensure that municipal boards have the proper training to carry out the new planning and zoning requirements.

Actions:

1. Appoint Planning Board members who represent diverse interests, including architecture, agriculture, business, natural and cultural resources and long-term community advocacy.
2. Ensure that municipal entities can effectively implement the recommendations of The Rhinebeck Plan to enhance rural character by providing them with clear direction, training and resources. Inform new members of training obligations before they assume their position.
3. Require Dutchess County Planning Federation certification of all Planning Board members.
4. Update and adopt administrative policies and project review checklists for the Planning and Zoning Boards and applicants to streamline the review process.
5. Provide the Planning Board with adequate planning resources, such as adequate staffing and easy access to officially adopted maps, in order to better enable them to carry out the Board's new responsibilities under The Rhinebeck Plan.

6. Train an assistant to the Planning Board, or a Planning Board member, in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to facilitate conservation subdivision design and other recommended planning techniques of The Rhinebeck Plan.
7. Establish a policy and procedures for Zoning Board of Appeals' referrals to the Planning Board for advisory opinions on proposed zoning variances.
8. Adopt a policy that site plans approved by the Planning Board cannot be altered or modified through a Zoning Board of Appeals review.
9. Require municipal officials on the Planning and Zoning Boards to participate in the seminar-based Land Use Learning Program, such as that which has been sponsored by the Pace University Land Use Law Center and administered by the New York Planning Federation, designed to teach busy local officials the basics of New York land use law and practice. Encourage other municipal officials, such as the Town Board and Conservation Advisory Council to participate, at a minimum, in the Center's home study-based program.
10. Provide training opportunities for the Planning Board in the effective use of SEQR, the *Greenway Guides*, Rhinebeck Design Guidelines, the LWRP and other plans and handbooks, and innovative planning techniques and design principles that support community objectives and successful smart growth techniques.
11. Plan tours for the Planning Board that illustrate examples of conservation subdivisions and traditional neighborhood development in order to understand, first-hand, the benefits of smart growth.

Objective: Ensure that the visions expressed in The Rhinebeck Plan are implemented through town/village cooperation.

Actions:

1. Maintain and enhance cooperation in land use planning between the town and village.
2. Prepare and enact an inter-municipal agreement between the town and village to create a "Consolidated Planning Board," pursuant to § 284 of Town Law and § 7-741 of village Law. The purpose of the Board would be to cooperate on land use planning matters – the new Board not intended to replace the existing two planning boards, but rather to supplement them, comprising members of each. Direct the new Board to consider such land use planning matters as:
 - ✓ Coordinating the comprehensive plans of the municipalities;
 - ✓ Planning development districts (in designated locations) that could be served by joint water and/or sewer systems
 - ✓ Reviewing projects with significant, potential inter-municipal benefits and impacts
 - ✓ Consideration of a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program for non-profit organizations
3. Create a task force advised by a professional planner to develop a detailed plan for the structure and function of the consolidated Planning Board, subject to input and approval by the public and officials from both municipalities.

¹ The Structure, Functions and Financing of Local Government: Adapting to Modern Challenges, New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. "The Commission on Rural Resources defines as rural those towns with population densities up to 150 persons per square mile." August 1991.

² Such as the ones recently installed in Tivoli

³ GIS is a technology that is used to view and analyze data from a geographic perspective. GIS links location to information (such as buildings, soils or wetlands to parcels) and layers that information to give you a better understanding of how it all interrelates.

Housing

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The peak building boom in Rhinebeck occurred in the 1980's when the town's housing stock increased 18.8 percent. There was a 14.7 percent increase in housing units in the prior decade, indicating that approximately one-third of the town's housing was constructed between 1970 and 1990. This increase reflects the high rate of population growth that occurred in Rhinebeck during this time. A large percentage (33.8 percent) of the town's housing stock was constructed prior to 1939. Rhinebeck has a higher percentage of older homes than neighboring towns and Dutchess County as a whole. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of housing units increased only 8.2 percent; however, during this time population declined.

**TABLE 6.1: PERCENTAGE OF HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION
RHINEBECK, NEIGHBORING TOWNS, AND DUTCHESS COUNTY**

	1939 or earlier	1940-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-2000
Rhinebeck*	33.8	17	7.5	14.7	18.8	8.2
Red Hook*	31.6	17.8	11	11.8	16.8	11
Milan	28	19	12.8	15.6	13.1	11.5
Clinton	24.1	15.9	11.9	19	19.8	9.3
Hyde Park	13.7	28.1	17.3	21.9	12.1	6.9
Dutchess County	20.9	21	16.7	17.4	14.4	9.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau * Town data includes villages.

While Rhinebeck is dominated by single-family homes, it also has a high percentage of multi-family units, consisting predominantly of alternative care housing such as nursing homes, senior housing, group homes, and similar care facilities. These include but are not limited to Ferncliff Nursing Home, The Astor Home for Children, Daytop Village, Baptist Home of Brooklyn, the Thompson House, Wells Manor and Anderson House. Other affordable housing options include the multi-family Village Green Apartments in the village, the Garden Homes Mobile

Home Park, a mobile home park on Old Post Road, a multi-family development on South Mill Road, and a multi-family development on Salisbury Turnpike.

In 2000, Rhinebeck's housing was 69 percent single-family detached units, 5.5 percent single-family attached units, four percent mobile homes, and 21 percent multi-family units. In comparison with neighboring municipalities, Rhinebeck has a higher percentage of multi-family units, as shown in Table 6.2. The percentage of mobile homes is roughly comparable with Dutchess County and surrounding communities, with the exception of Clinton, which has only one percent, and Hyde Park, which has 9.6 percent. Sixty-seven percent of occupied units in Rhinebeck are owner-occupied and 33 percent are renter-occupied.

TABLE 6.2: TYPES OF HOUSING, RHINEBECK, NEIGHBORING TOWNS*, DUTCHESS COUNTY, 2000

	Total Housing Units	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	Mobile Home	Multi-Family Units
Rhinebeck	3,255	2,253 (69.2%)	178 (5.5%)	130 (4.0%)	694 (21.3%)
Red Hook	3,840	2,930 (76.3%)	70 (1.8%)	203 (5.3%)	637 (16.6%)
Milan	1,090	947 (86.9%)	0 (0%)	48 (4.4%)	95 (8.7%)
Clinton	1,734	1,593 (91.9%)	27 (1.6%)	18 (1.0%)	96 (5.5%)
Hyde Park	7,704	5,301 (68.8%)	158 (2.0%)	742 (9.6%)	1,512 (19.6%)
Dutchess County	106,103	68,779 (64.8%)	4,658 (4.4%)	4,413 (4.2%)	28,253 (26.6%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau * Town data includes villages.

While Rhinebeck has a high proportion of multi-family units, it also has a very low vacancy rate. In 2000, Rhinebeck had a total of 3,255 housing units, of which 3,001 (92.2 percent) were occupied. Of the remaining units, 4.4 percent were for seasonal, recreational or occasional use, leaving a vacancy rate of only 3.4 percent, the majority of which was in the rental sector. Housing professionals typically recognize a vacancy rate of 5 percent as the benchmark of an optimally functioning housing market. When the vacancy rate drops below the five percent benchmark, the scarcity of available units creates greater competition, which accelerates rent increases and drives up housing costs. These conditions may be occurring in Rhinebeck, as reflected in the high percentage of households (25.6 percent) which are cost-burdened, defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as paying more than 30 percent of gross income for housing. This is slightly higher than in Dutchess County as a whole, where 24.1 percent of residents are cost burdened. The scarcity of affordable housing can be particularly difficult for senior citizens on fixed incomes, single-income families and entry-level employees.

The median value of owner-occupied units in Rhinebeck in 2000 was \$168,300, which is higher than the median of \$154,200 in Dutchess County. However, a survey of the for-sale housing market undertaken by the Smart Growth Housing Task Force indicates that between 2000 and 2002, the median sales price of a single-family home in the county increased 36 percent. A household would need to

While Rhinebeck has a high proportion of multi-family units, it also has a very low vacancy rate, which may adversely impact housing affordability.

make \$70,000 to afford the median priced house of \$210,000. Contract rent in Rhinebeck (\$714 per month) was comparable to that in Dutchess County (\$707 per month). Housing costs have increased even further since surveys were taken.

TABLE 6.3: RHINEBECK HOUSING UNITS, 2000

	Rhinebeck*	Town of Rhinebeck**	Village of Rhinebeck
Total Housing Units	3,255	1,792	1,463
Owner-Occupied Units	2,018	1,221	797
Renter-Occupied Units	983	404	579
Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use	144	101	43
Vacant Units	110	66	44

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. * Includes both town and village. **Excludes village.

TABLE 6.4: AVERAGE VALUES OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS RHINEBECK*, NEIGHBORING TOWNS*, AND DUTCHESS COUNTY

	1980	2000
Rhinebeck	\$52,783	\$168,300
Red Hook	\$47,544	\$144,600
Milan	\$44,531	\$138,000
Clinton	\$53,592	\$162,200
Hyde Park	\$48,702	\$130,400
Dutchess County	\$52,775	\$154,200

Source: U.S. Census Bureau * Town data includes villages.

A F F O R D A B L E H O U S I N G

Like all other municipalities, the town of Rhinebeck has a responsibility, and is working to provide a balance of housing for all its residents, including families with children, the elderly, young households and empty nesters, people just entering the workforce, and families of limited or fixed income. The provision of a diversity of housing types and costs is important for sustaining businesses and encouraging economic growth, since businesses are unlikely to establish themselves or remain in an area where their employees cannot afford to live. Moreover, as housing costs increase, people must work longer hours, leaving them little time to volunteer. Many important services in Rhinebeck are staffed through volunteers. If a shortage of volunteers forces these services to convert to paid positions, the town's municipal budget will be strained. In the city of Poughkeepsie, for instance, paid fire protection services cost approximately \$664 per structure. Finally, when employees cannot afford to live in the community where they work, they are forced to commute, which contributes to auto dependency and traffic congestion.

The availability of diverse housing choices is critical for the economic vitality of the town. Moreover, Rhinebeck residents value the diversity of their community. Retaining that diversity

depends upon providing a variety of housing choices for households with different needs and income levels to house high wage earners and young professionals, teachers, nurses, volunteer firefighters, and minimum wage earners. Since market conditions alone do not necessarily encourage housing diversity, the Rhinebeck community recognizes a need to:

Use appropriate proactive strategies to ensure housing opportunities exist for persons with diverse income levels. Particular emphasis should be placed on providing housing opportunities to the workers in Rhinebeck's schools, fire and police departments, hospital, retirement homes and special care facilities, public services, libraries, restaurants and retail establishments.

According to the Mid-Hudson Multiple Listing Service, sale prices of homes in Dutchess County continue to climb. The median single family home price in October 2004 was \$313,000, up from \$300,000 in September 2004 – a four percent increase in just one month. A year previously, in October 2003, the median was \$275,000 – a 13 percent increase in one year. Prevailing low mortgage rates, increasing demand, and declining inventories have resulted in significant increases in sales activity and prices in Rhinebeck, as in the Northern Dutchess region as a whole. Using the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) guidelines that a household should not pay more than 30 percent of their gross income for housing, including utilities, households would need an annual income of \$89,320 to afford a \$313,000 home.¹ In order to purchase a \$250,000 home, households would have to earn approximately \$73,000.

According to the Dutchess County Rental Housing Survey 2003, the vacancy rate for apartments in the town of Rhinebeck in 2003 was 0 percent. For the county as a whole, the vacancy rate was 1.8 percent. Housing experts recognize a five percent vacancy rate as an indicator of a healthy rental market. An extremely low vacancy rate may benefit landlords but it negatively affects tenants by accelerating rent increases and making housing unaffordable. The town of Rhinebeck has 144 apartments (all located in the Village Green complex within the village)² and no new apartment complexes have been built in over 20 years. During the month of October 2003, a newspaper survey conducted for the Rental Housing Survey indicated that local newspapers advertised 21 multi-family units, 20 homes and one condominium for rent in the town of Rhinebeck. Average rents for apartments, multi-family units and homes/condos in the town of Rhinebeck in 2003 are shown in Table 6.5.

TABLE 6.5: AVERAGE RENTS IN THE TOWN OF RHINEBECK, 2003

Unit Type	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
Apartments	N/A	\$738	\$905	N/A
Multi-family units	\$694	\$787	\$1,075	N/A
Homes/condos	N/A	\$892	\$1,283	\$1,669

As shown in Table 6.6, average rents have increased in all categories in the last two years (between 2001 and 2003), with increases ranging from two percent for a two-bedroom multi-family unit to 29 percent for a three-bedroom home.

¹ Assumes a 5 percent down payment, a 6 percent interest rate on a 30 year fixed term mortgage, \$3,000 per year in real estate taxes, and \$200 a month in utilities.

² All of these are market-rate apartments. The Town of Rhinebeck has no subsidized housing.

TABLE 6.6: PERCENT CHANGE FROM 2001 TO 2003

	Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
Apartments	N/A	5%	4%	N/A
Multi-family units	20%	10%	2%	N/A
Homes/condos	N/A	6%	8%	29%

Using the HUD guidelines referenced above, households would need the following annual incomes to afford the average Rhinebeck rents cited in Table 6.7:³

TABLE 6.7: INCOME REQUIRED TO AFFORD RENTAL UNITS

Unit Sizes	Annual Income
Apartment Complexes	
Studio	\$25,720*
1 Bedroom	\$29,520
2 Bedroom	\$36,200
3 Bedroom	\$52,280**
Multi-Family Units	
Studio	\$27,760
1 Bedroom	\$31,480
2 Bedroom	\$43,000
3 Bedroom	\$49,400***
Homes/Condos	
Studio	No data
1 Bedroom	\$35,680
2 Bedroom	\$51,320
3 Bedroom	\$66,760

* Since no data is available for this category in the town of Rhinebeck, this figure is based on the County average rent of \$643/month for a studio apartment.

** Based on the county average rent of \$1,307/month for a three-bedroom apartment.

*** Based on the county average rent of \$1,235/month for a three-bedroom, multi-family unit.

Use of the term “affordable housing” can be relative. After all, what is affordable to someone whose income is a quarter of a million dollars (\$250,000) per year is far different from what is affordable to someone making twenty five thousand dollars (\$25,000) per year. That is why many housing planners prefer to use the term “work-force housing” to describe housing that is

³ Since most multi-family units do not include utilities in the rent, a utility allowance, was added to each multi-family unit types’ average rent before the annual income was calculated. Similarly, since the rental fee for most apartment complexes does not include electric, an electric allowance, was added to all apartment complex rents.

affordable to those persons who are gainfully employed but with limited financial resources, such as teachers, municipal workers, laborers, and retail or service workers. Nevertheless, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “affordable housing” as a home or rental unit within the means of a household income that is 80 percent or less than the prevailing median income in the area. According to the U.S. Census data, the median household income in the town of Rhinebeck in 2000 was \$52,679.

Thus, affordable housing would be housing that could be afforded by households making 80 percent of this income, or \$42,143. Given the median single-family home price in Rhinebeck, these households will have a difficult time finding a home they can afford to buy in the town. While households in this income bracket could afford to rent a one- or two-bedroom apartment, there is currently a 0 percent vacancy rate for these units (and no studio apartments available in Rhinebeck). Thus, many Rhinebeck households will only be able to afford studio or one-bedroom multi-family units, or one-bedroom homes/condos. Families with children, workers who need a second bedroom for a home office and seniors or invalids who need a second bedroom for a caregiver will be particularly affected by the local housing market and will be “housed out” of the community.

When the 2000 Census was conducted, it found that one-third of Rhinebeck residents are employed in educational, health services, or social services fields, which typically pay anywhere from \$29,000 to \$60,000 annually. Twelve percent are employed in retail trade, earning approximately \$15,400 to \$19,600 annually. The balance of Rhinebeck residents are employed in a variety of professional, administrative, construction, or hospitality trades, earning anywhere from \$17,000 to \$89,000 annually. Nearly 36 percent of Rhinebeck households earn less than \$35,000 annually, and these households cannot afford most current market rents in Rhinebeck. Thirty-two percent earn between \$35,000 and \$75,000 annually, and these households would not be able to afford to buy a home. Thus, households with moderate income have very few housing choices in Rhinebeck.

The term “affordable housing” is often misunderstood. As stated above, a better term for this type of housing is “work force” housing, since it is working members of the community, like teachers, nurses, volunteer firefighters, and shopkeepers who are included in the HUD definition. However, the emphasis should not just be on workers, since a broad range of lifestyles require affordable housing, including people who no longer work and are on fixed incomes, like senior citizens. Whatever it is called, it is important to provide a variety of housing types, rather than serving only one household type and income group, in order to encourage an economically diverse community and permit people in all stages of life to live and stay in the community.

During the visioning meetings and in the public opinion survey conducted for The Rhinebeck Plan, many Rhinebeck residents expressed concern that they would be forced to leave the community when they retire, or that their children would be not be able to afford to remain in the community when they grow up. Clearly, there is a need for a balanced housing stock that meets the Rhinebeck community’s diverse housing needs. The Rhinebeck Plan recommends a number of strategies for providing affordable housing to meet this need. These recommendations are outlined below and are considered as part of an overall land use strategy outlined in Chapter 5. The Rhinebeck Plan incorporates the work of the Open Space and Affordable Housing Committee which investigated specific approaches and strategies for implementing solutions for affordable housing. The report of the Committee is included in Appendix 5.

Vision: Strive to achieve social, economic and cultural diversity within the community by planning for a diverse array of housing types, strive to provide housing for Rhinebeck’s first time homebuyers, seniors, and work force including retailers, school, hospital/health care, fire and law enforcement personnel and office workers, among others.

Housing provides residents with shelter and is a key factor in determining quality of life, jobs-housing balance, access to transportation, commutation to work, access to services and schools, consumption of energy and other natural resources. The provision of quality housing for people of all income levels in the community and a balanced housing stock is a key part of any smart growth strategy. By using smart growth to create a diverse range of housing choices, Rhinebeck can use its infrastructure more efficiently, support its commercial centers, better accommodate the housing needs of all residents, help its aging citizens stay in their homes, and reduce or eliminate the impacts of auto-dependent development.

Rhinebeck is a town nationally recognized for its unique sense of place and for its irreplaceable quality of life. The town’s land area is finite, and eventually build-out will occur; but it should be based upon a sound “smart growth” strategy. The most vibrant and successful communities are the ones that actively take a role in maintaining diversity. Today, these communities take a multi-pronged approach to development by incorporating a smart growth strategy into their overall growth management system.

Objective: Accommodate the housing needs of a broad spectrum of community residents so that our local workforce, senior citizens, first time homebuyers and the children of residents can afford to live in Rhinebeck.

Actions:

1. Use the Smart Growth Network’s “Ten Principles of Smart Growth,” to create a wider range of housing choices, to use infrastructure more efficiently and cost-effectively and as a policy guide for sound planning:
 - ☐ Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
 - ☐ Provide a variety of transportation choices
 - ☐ Create walkable neighborhoods
 - ☐ Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions
 - ☐ Take advantage of compact building design
 - ☐ Strengthen and direct new development toward areas of existing development
 - ☐ Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective
2. Rhinebeck has a multitude of large scale alternative care and senior housing developments, as described above, but is in need of smaller scale senior developments. Create senior or active adult housing provisions in the Zoning Law and use stringent performance standards to guide the development of small-scale projects for senior citizens in appropriate locations.
3. Prohibit gated communities in the town.

Objective: Create an overall Town strategy for achieving affordable housing goals.

Actions:

1. Create an Open Space and Affordable Housing Board to lead the Town's efforts in identifying opportunities for affordable housing that are in keeping with the Town's goals to protect community character and open space.⁴
2. Develop a set of Affordable Housing strategies that would mandate inclusion of affordable housing at the rate of 10 percent of the total number of market-rate units in any new development of 5 units or more. Allow in-lieu payment for affordable housing units in new developments of 4 units or less. Allow transfer of inclusionary obligations to other parcels within Town under limited conditions.
3. Develop "Least Cost" strategies to allow creation of new housing units such as accessory apartments, cottage units, two-family units, or multi-family units.
4. Consider creation of a Community Trust Fund to serve as a funding option for preservation of open space and affordable housing.
5. Create a mechanism in Town Code to maintain work-force housing stock for an appropriate period of time. Ensure that the units are available for as long as legally possible.¹ Utilize the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development as a resource in establishing work-force housing standards.



Six first time homebuyer townhouses designed to look like a "mansion"

Vision: Take into account the requirements of special, diverse populations when addressing housing needs of the community.

All persons have a right to be treated respectfully and equally, and it is a duty of government to ensure that freedom from discrimination extends to all persons, regardless of their special needs.

Objective: Special needs of physically handicapped persons should be considered in the review of all new residential and non-residential developments.

Actions:

1. Incorporate strategies to address the needs of handicapped persons in all public improvements at the design and approval stages of development.
2. Develop sidewalk and walking path specifications to ensure handicapped access.
3. Appoint an *ad hoc* committee to advise the Planning Board, during the review and approval process, comprised of handicapped persons and professionals with education and experience in meeting the specialized needs of handicapped persons.

If we can afford to build million dollar homes in this community, then we can afford to build housing that meets the needs of all of our residents.

Steve Rosenberg, Plan Committee Member

⁴ The Open Space and Affordable Housing Committee has already completed a study which is included in the Rhinebeck Plan as Appendix 5. It should be noted that the Town Board incorporated some, but not all, of the recommendations of the Open Space and Affordable Housing Committee report in The Rhinebeck Plan.

Objective: The development of accessory apartments should continue to be permitted, as long as appropriate standards are met and neighborhood character is maintained.

Actions:

1. Review accessory apartment requirements in the Zoning Law to determine whether to expand the requirements governing where the apartments can be developed (i.e., in existing residences, accessory structures or new construction). Re-visit the size limits, water and sewer requirements and other conditions on accessory apartments to ensure that they remain accessory apartments. Create a provision whereby input from the Planning Board is provided on all applications before the Zoning Board of Appeals for area variances for accessory apartments.

Objective: Protect the character of existing residential neighborhoods, historic architecture, and avoid upward pressure on property values by constraining teardowns of existing housing stock.

Actions:

1. Prohibit outright teardowns of existing housing stock in the town by using a demolition delay zoning provision for historic structures, in order to provide time for a threatened structure to be bought, relocated and rehabilitated for continuing affordability. Incorporate this prohibition into the Historic Structures Law.

Vision: Plan all development to be appropriately in keeping with Rhinebeck's unique, small-town character and its historic and architectural heritage.

When left to market forces, development often happens in a way that maximizes profit for the developer at the expense of a community's unique character and community preferences. Design Standards are one of the most effective tools available to assist in retaining the town's rural, scenic and historic qualities. A primary objective of the standards is to show, through graphic illustrations and photographs, that the natural environment can remain the primary feature of the landscape, as opposed to the residential structures and house lots being imposed as the predominant feature. The right design standards illustrate how residences can complement and be integrated into the natural landscape.

Objective: Architecture of proposed new structures should enhance the character of the town.

Actions:

1. Require that the town's design standards for non-residential development be considered in the approval process for all new commercial development and re-development.
2. Prepare criteria and design standards that would apply to all new developments in the town. Include guidance on assessment and control of such desirable neighborhood characteristics as scale and mass of existing, *versus* new structures in the design standards.
3. Prepare design standards for new development which include, but are not limited to: protection of the natural and cultural features of a site; keeping buildings below on-site ridgelines or tree lines; use traditional building materials (and/or environmentally-friendly, "green" building materials which closely resemble traditional materials), and traditional architectural styles and roof lines; use muted and earth-toned colors; maintain natural vegetation; preserve historic landscape features; site driveways unobtrusively; encourage use of stone walls rather than fences; and hide garages
4. Enact protective regulations that restrict development on ridgelines and other environmental features.

Objective: All housing should meet environmental, public health and safety criteria.

Actions:

1. Encourage adoption of a town wide “green building” standard based on the US Green Building Council’s “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System,” or other similar guidance in order to reduce environmental impacts. Accordingly, rate the design and construction of building projects that preserve natural vegetation; contain non-toxic or recycled-content building materials; maintain good indoor air-quality; use water and energy efficiently; conserve natural resources; feature natural lighting; include recycling facilities throughout; include access to public transportation; feature flexible interiors; and recycle construction and demolition waste.
2. Adopt a green building guidebook that describes energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive building techniques that would pass town inspection. Include, in the Guidebook, potential cost savings or other benefits of using such techniques. Require developers undergoing subdivision or site plan review to consider the Guidebook's techniques.
3. Require projects developed with public funding, including all town projects, to make use of green building techniques, the projects thus serving both as models and test cases for private development.
4. Make information available to development applicants on the State's Green Tax Credit, and strongly support and encourage applications for use of the credit.
5. Educate residents about green building techniques and their advantages, and encourage energy-efficient habits for individuals and households. Bolster public education efforts, particularly through the schools, on the use of solar heating, solar electricity and geothermal heating/cooling. Use the town's Web site to promote conservation best practices. Send property owners a brochure with conservation tips in their tax bills, similar to the “Homeowners Guide to Living with Nature,” distributed by the Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership.

Objective: Create opportunities for the provision of a reasonable supply of moderately priced housing, while maintaining high standards of architectural and site design.

Actions:

1. Adopt a Cottage Housing Development Amendment to the Zoning Law that would allow compact housing densities for small houses in designated priority growth areas. Set standards for siting that would require common areas, private yards, sidewalks, gardens and parking hidden from the street.
2. Amend the Zoning Law to allow residential dwellings to be built in conjunction with commercial development, and require developers to set aside a percentage of any units built as affordable housing to residents earning less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income and also for residents earning between 50 and 80 percent of the Area Median Income.
3. Support first-time homebuyers in priority growth areas through tax credits or direct down payment assistance.



Multi-family and single-family can co-exist side-by-side

4. Support housing for people in all stages of life, from young adults and couples, to families with children, to seniors, by creating an Inclusionary Housing Program in the town.

Require that ten percent of the units in every market-rate housing development be kept affordable to moderate-income families and tied to a benchmark in common use,



Handicapped accessible multi-family units can be designed to resemble traditional farm structures.

- such as 80 percent of median income, to define affordability. Consider exempting affordable units from the town's recreation and other fee requirements.
5. Use SEQR to analyze the necessity of providing affordable housing in new developments as mitigation to minimize adverse effects of new single-family development.
 6. Amend the Zoning Law to allow a reasonable number of homes in suitable locations that are within economic reach of town residents by allowing development in priority growth areas.
 7. Consider the use of appropriate municipally owned lands for development of small (6 to 12 unit) affordable multi-family dwellings, designed to resemble traditional farm structures and managed by a not-for-profit housing organization. If the town and village ever consolidate their highway departments, consider the use of the current village highway garage for such use. Explore the potential for use of some of the town-owned lands on Stone Church Road for such use.

¹ Some communities require 15 to 30 years; other communities require its maintenance in perpetuity.

Economic Development

The Town of Rhinebeck has some limited commercial uses but the majority of economic activity in the area is focused on the Village of Rhinebeck and the City of Kingston in Ulster County. The commercial uses in the Town are concentrated along Routes 9 and 9G and generally consist of highway commercial uses such as gas stations, car dealerships, and other auto related uses. Other uses found in this area include the Stop & Shop grocery store, Williams Lumber, and various other small businesses such as restaurants. The Town recognizes the function of the Village of Rhinebeck as a commercial center and wishes to limit new commercial development that may compete with the Village.

Vision: The viability of existing, locally owned businesses in Rhinebeck should be maintained, and the village commercial center should be preserved and protected as a lively and active one.

Locally owned businesses help provide Rhinebeck with its local character. When residents use locally owned services or shop at locally owned stores, more money stays and gets recycled in the town. A strong local economy with lots of businesses is one of the best ways to ensure competition. If local ownership is supported, so is free enterprise. Local ownership brings about leadership and financial support for government, not-for-profits and the community at large.

Objective: Support local businesses.

Actions:

1. Support local businesses, where possible, by establishing a “Buy Local” policy for all town-purchased supplies, materials, equipment, machinery and other provisions.
2. Start a “Think Local First” shopping program to educate residents on the advantages of buying locally.¹
3. Work to maintain a low unemployment rate by supporting locally owned businesses, which create more jobs locally and often provide better wages and benefits than do national chains.
4. Interface with the Rhinebeck business community and the Chamber of Commerce to support existing businesses, and identify new, diversified businesses, which serve Rhinebeck residents with necessary and affordable goods and services.
5. Maintain the vitality of the village and prevent strip development and retail sprawl along outlying Routes 9, 9G and 308.
6. Amend the Zoning to require that new retail proposals be subject to an economic and community impact review prior to granting approval.

7. Work to ensure that new retail stores are geared toward meeting the needs of local residents, as opposed to visitors or the regional economy.
8. Establish a Commercial Land Trust (CLT) for local businesses² to establish and maintain affordable commercial buildings, with the requirement that buyers or lessees be independent, as opposed to national or chain businesses. Work with the Rhinebeck Chamber of Commerce on the project.
9. Consider conducting a market analysis to identify opportunities for new entrepreneurs and local businesses seeking to expand.
10. Ensure there is an appropriate jobs-housing balance in the town to prevent Rhinebeck from becoming a “bedroom community.”
11. Help local businesses by assisting in the creation of a community-wide e-commerce Web site for local retailers³.
12. Encourage business owners to issue joint loyalty cards, such as the Community Benefit Card, which can work at dozens of local stores and encourage local shopping by rewarding customers with discounts, rebates or other rewards.

Objective: Limited commercial expansion should be allowed in designated hamlet centers outside the village center.

Actions:

1. Restrict community commercial development to the existing commercial area along Route 9 just south of Route 9G and support the existing commercial district in the hamlet of Rhinecliff.
2. Permit small scale neighborhood retail and service businesses in selected locations of the town to serve only the immediate neighborhood. Applicants must demonstrate that a majority of their sales would be derived from the immediately surrounding area.
3. Establish criteria and amend the Zoning Law to require that new development meet the criteria, so that its overall impact will be positive on the environment, historic and cultural resources, community character, public revenues, the local economy and existing business districts.
4. Explore the use of mandatory adaptive reuse or removal of a commercial structure that remains unused for a period of 12 or more months, as part of site development approvals, similar to the code requirements of Buckingham, PA and Peachtree City, GA.

Vision: Encourage new businesses in the town that are built to human scale; provide employment for residents; and offer goods and services geared to their needs.

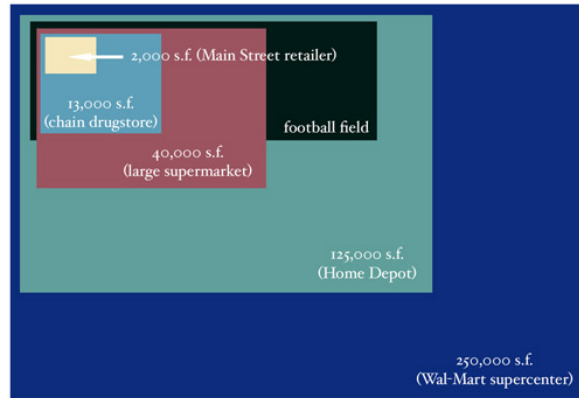
Out-of-scale chain stores have decimated downtown business districts throughout the country, and changed many communities forever. To avoid this, commercial development in the town should be appropriately sized and subjected to an impact review that examines employment (jobs gained versus jobs lost), wages, tax revenues, and other impact issues such as roads and other public services, historic resources, air and water pollution, and traffic. Independent consultants must conduct economic and fiscal studies and then the project's overall costs need to be weighed against its benefits, or lack thereof, before proceeding.

Objective: Commercial development should be limited to the scale and character necessary to protect Rhinebeck's historic, small town atmosphere.

Actions:

1. Support and complement the village center through careful review of new commercial development.

2. Discourage development that will detract from the ability of the village of Rhinebeck to function as the primary commercial center of the community.
3. Concentrate new commercial development in the village, where infrastructure exists or can be efficiently provided.
4. Plan new commercial ventures so that they do not draw business away from existing businesses located in the village.
5. Prohibit additional “big box” businesses by limiting the size of new retail facilities in the town. Establish a maximum of 8,000 square feet on all new retail development, so that only businesses scaled to serve Rhinebeck and the immediately surrounding rural communities can locate in the town. Allow reasonable changes to be made to existing big-box businesses over 8,000 square feet.
6. Review and amend the current permitted Principal and Special Permit uses allowed in the town’s non-residential zoning districts to ensure that they are appropriate uses to serve community needs.
7. Strive to restrict land uses that could be classified as “adult uses” and which have negative secondary adverse effects on their neighborhoods, to the fullest extent permitted by law. Ensure that town decision-makers study the issue and then set specific requirements in accordance with guidelines developed by the U.S. Supreme Court.



Comparison of the relative size of stores

Objective: Discourage chain stores and franchises, and limit the size of commercial businesses in order to serve local, as opposed to regional, needs.

Actions:

1. Enact a formula fast food amendment to the Zoning Law that disallows the establishment of fast-food chain stores in the town, given that formula, fast food chains are available within a ten-minute drive of Rhinebeck.
2. Provide clear design standards for architectural compatibility, scale and form, signage, colors, landscaping and lighting for all development in the town to preclude national chain stores that wish to conduct business in the town from taking on their corporate appearance. Encourage the Town Board to empower the Planning Board to design regulations for architectural review of national chain development.
3. Discourage the architectural “formulae” that franchise businesses employ for purposes of corporate identify.

Objective: Encourage the expansion of employment opportunities.

Actions:

1. Promote the creative use of agricultural and natural lands in the town to serve the needs of such *niche* markets as the Rhinebeck Farmers Market, green markets in the New York

metropolitan area, nurseries, botanical and nutraceutical production, and other soils-based crops.

2. Promote sustainable forestry management in the town as a viable economic activity that helps to maintain lands in their natural state. Examine the Zoning Law and town policies that affect sustainable forestry to make them forester-friendly.
3. Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to work with the Dutchess County Economic Development Corp. to prepare a comprehensive economic development strategy for the town. Tour towns in the area that have been successful in attracting new businesses to learn about and mimic strategies that others adopted to encourage economic growth. Establish an enterprise center or incubator that provides small businesses in the same or related industries with a facility and shared services. Invite speakers from Mid-Hudson Patterns for Progress, New York State Economic Development, Regional Plan Association, and the Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation to talk about how to achieve job growth, which reflects the strategic objectives of The Rhinebeck Plan. Consider these strategies for integration into the Office Research Park Zoning District.
4. Identify and build on existing, small-scale local enterprises by seeking input from local entrepreneurs who are working on the cutting edge of new business creation. Identify such entrepreneurs is through the US Patent Office, using the search engine provided on the US Patent Office's Internet Web site to find all patents granted to individuals or companies by zip code. Incent economic growth in Rhinebeck by identifying the specific needs of these innovative thinkers and assisting them in developing their ideas into town business ventures.
5. Encourage the Northern Dutchess Alliance to look for opportunities to identify specific job-creating uses in town, and work with Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation to accomplish this task.
6. Consider appointing planning staff to research or promote economic development or to assist with implementing The Rhinebeck Plan policies – perhaps in cooperation with local businesses or business associations.
7. Approach area banks to invest in Rhinebeck's economic growth, in accordance with the Community Reinvestment Act of 1997, which requires that banks affirmatively seek out lending opportunities in the local communities they serve.
8. Set up a revolving loan fund to jump-start local, home-based businesses (including farmers), and to entice related out-of-town businesses that would provide employment opportunities for residents to locate in Rhinebeck.
9. Provide information and technical assistance directly to businesses in the targeted sector.
10. Provide expertise to assist new businesses in the development review and approval process.
11. Review the submissions of developers and recommend changes to them to ensure their compatibility with the vision for Rhinebeck expressed by its residents and set forth in The Rhinebeck Plan.
12. Continue to support tourism-related businesses as employment generators.

Objective: Encourage home occupations that do not disrupt neighborhood character.

Actions:

1. Promote home occupations in the town. Establish a permit procedure for monitoring and enforcement to safeguard uses that may be potentially objectionable.
2. Expand the home occupations provisions of the Zoning Law to set additional thresholds for home occupation activities that would potentially cause a disruption to neighborhood character; require a special use permit from the Planning Board for activities that exceed the thresholds.

3. Address parking, lighting, signage, noise and daily business activity to avoid impacts on nearby residential properties.

Objective: Encourage the development of manufacturing and office research in designated locations.

Actions:

1. Implement the changes to the light industrial and office/research facility parcels recommended in the proposed Zoning Map in The Rhinebeck Plan (based on the environmental constraint maps), and re-zone them for these uses. Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Dutchess Alliance to attract research facilities, professional offices, small manufacturing, and high tech firms in locations where effective transportation and other suitable services are available.
2. To encourage light industrial and office research development consistent with Rhinebeck's rural character, adopt updated performance standards to reduce or eliminate environmental impacts of this type of new development.

Vision: Encourage tourism in Rhinebeck at a scale that respects the town's historic and rural character, making visitors feel welcome and respecting the primary needs of residents, year-round.

Rhinebeck has become a destination and is well situated near regional tourism attractions, such as: the Bard Performing Arts Center, Kaatsbaan, Wilderstein, Staatsburg State Historic Site (Mills Mansion) and Norrie Point State Parks, Montgomery Place, the Fairgrounds, Burger Hill Park, Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, the Rhinebeck Performing Arts Center, Catskill Mountains, the Appalachian Trail, the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Sites, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, and Kingston's Rondout Creek Waterfront, which has boat rentals and access to the Hudson River

Objective: Encourage tourism activity that takes advantage of Rhinebeck's history of farming and agriculture, as well as its proximity to historic sites and destinations; discourage tourism activity that detracts from Rhinebeck's history and sense of place.

Actions:

1. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic or unique farm buildings that merit special attention for specialized, commercial operations, such as antique shops or gift shops, to help preserve them and to encourage appropriate tourism. Use a performance-based approach. Give special consideration to preserving such pre-existing farm structures as barns.
2. Capitalize on Rhinebeck's proximity to regional tourism attractions and destinations by encouraging inns, bed-and-breakfasts and other facilities serving tourists. Work with Dutchess County Tourism to promote Rhinebeck as a "Destination to Stay," providing lodgings for visitors to nearby regional sites.
3. Re-examine the regulations for bed & breakfasts to ensure compatibility with and to reduce impacts on residential neighborhoods. Consider broadening the threshold for special use permits. Add requirements for examining well and septic system suitability, among other impact issues.
4. Permit and promote accessory farm businesses such as "Pick Your Own" and Christmas tree cutting in the Zoning Law, to capitalize on their tourism potential.
5. Develop the Hucklebush Rail Line as a rail-trail, and identify linkages to other trail networks (including the 20-mile Historic District Bike/Hike Trail and the Central Hudson Gas & Electric corridors), both in and outside of Rhinebeck. Work with the state's Hudson River

- Estuarine Sanctuary Program to provide linkages to the planned Blueway Trail on the Hudson River.
6. Take advantage of and promote Rhinebeck's proximity to the Hudson River as a stop on the Blueway Trail from Albany to New York, and as an important part of the Historic District Hike/Bike Trail. Provide facilities for launching canoes and kayaks, and coordinate efforts to encourage the development of bed and breakfasts and small inns in Rhinecliff and other appropriate locations to serve the users of the trails. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a River interpretative center in Rhinecliff – perhaps at the Morton Memorial Library – as a destination stop along the Blueway Trail. Apply for state funding, if feasible.
 7. Encourage re-establishment of ferry service at Rhinecliff as a tourism activity.
 8. Delineate gateways to the town from surrounding towns through appropriate entrance statements, possibly upgrading town signs in order to do so.
 9. Work with the Northern Dutchess Alliance and the towns of Red Hook, Hyde Park, Clinton, and Milan, the three villages in Northern Dutchess, and others that would be interested in establishing a joint tourism information booth at the gateway to Northern Dutchess County from the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. The booth could direct tourists to areas of interest, accommodations, and provide clues to the historic, cultural, natural and economic attractions of the area.
 10. Work with the village to establish gateways that clearly demark the transition from the rural town to the more developed village.
 11. Establish a gateway that clearly demarks the transition from the rural town to the more developed hamlet of Rhinecliff.

¹ A recent study in Chicago found that spending \$100 at locally owned businesses generates 70 percent more local economic impact than spending that same amount at national chain stores.

² CLTs are funded largely by community development block grants, which are available for both housing and economic development projects – similar to a Community Land Trust for affordable housing, but adapted to the needs of local businesses.

³ Business owners could share the expense of creating and marketing the e-commerce site by developing a community-wide portal, where residents could shop at any local store.

Traffic and Transportation

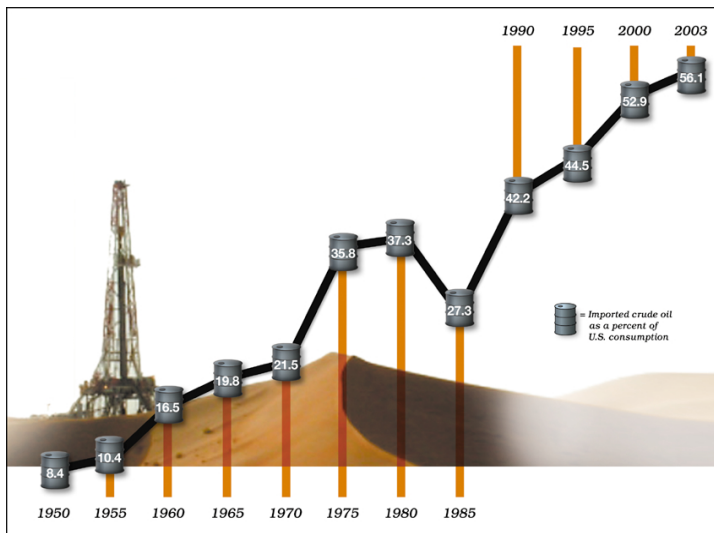
The automobile and the road network are the predominant mode of travel in Rhinebeck. Pedestrian facilities are found in the Village of Rhinebeck and to a more limited extent in the hamlet of Rhinecliff. Aside from the 20 Mile Trail which allows walking and biking along a signed route on a network of Town, Village, County, and State Roads, no other pedestrian or bicycle facilities, such as dedicated hiking, biking, and walking trails, paths or sidewalks exist in the public rights-of-way in the town. Designated bicycle routes exist in the Village and on State and County roads, but these are simply trail blazed (signed) bicycle routes along existing roads. Thus, facilities do not exist to reduce auto dependency nor create alternatives to personal vehicle travel in the town.

According to the MIT Technology Review:¹

“If the actions—rather than the words—of the oil business’s major players provide the best gauge of how they see the future, then ponder the following. Crude oil prices have doubled since 2001, but oil companies have increased their budgets for exploring new oil fields by only a small fraction. Likewise, U.S. refineries are working close to capacity, yet no new refinery has been constructed since 1976. And oil tankers are fully booked, but outdated ships are being decommissioned faster than new ones are being built. If those clues weren’t enough, here’s a news item that came out of Saudi Arabia on March 6, 2003. Though it went largely unremarked, the kingdom’s announcement that it could not produce more oil in response to the Iraq War was of historic importance. As Kenneth Deffeyes notes in Beyond Oil: The View from Hubbert’s Peak, it meant that as of 2003, there was no major underutilized oil source left on the planet. Even as established oil fields have reached their maximum production capacity, there has been disappointing production from new fields. Globally, according to some geologists’ estimates, we have discovered 94 percent of all available oil...In 1969, the prominent geologist M. King Hubbert predicted that a graph of world oil production over time would look like a bell curve, with a peak around the year 2000. Thereafter, he argued, production would drop—slowly at first, then ever faster. Hubbert had a track record as a prophet: his 1956 forecast that U.S. domestic oil production would peak in the early 1970s proved correct.”

While some experts debate when oil will peak, it is a non-renewable resource, meaning that the worldwide supply of it is limited. It has been estimated that each year, industrialized nations use the amount of oil that it took nature 100,000 years to create. As stated in Ode Magazine “it’s ancient sunlight trapped 65 million years ago by plants that we now dig up and ignite in the form of oil or coal or natural gas. We burn 100,000 years of ancient plant growth every year.” (Ode, Issue 18). The illustration below was created by an employee of the US Department of Energy, which

¹ March 2005, [MIT Technology Insider](#), *The End of Oil?* Mark Williams.



illustrates the percentage of imported crude oil consumed in the United States between 1950 and 2003.

When considering that residential and non-residential development will affect the land they occupy for one hundred years or more, it is essential that alternative means of mobility be also planned for in the event personal travel in fossil fuel powered vehicles becomes limited by price or availability. Rhinebeck should allow for the creation of compact new development that is walkable, bikeable, and is served by transit rather than continuing to encourage new development that is automobile dependent throughout the town. In addition to creating more compact development for the stated reasons, establishing trails and greenways throughout the town will improve in-town transportation alternatives and will also create recreation opportunities and influence economic development. Other trails and greenways benefits include:

- ☐ Encouraging physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle
- ☐ Improving quality of life
- ☐ Strengthening local economies for tourism and recreation-related spending
- ☐ Making the town more attractive for new business investment
- ☐ Protecting wildlife habitat and providing vital wildlife corridors
- ☐ Improving air and water quality
- ☐ Increasing property values
- ☐ Protecting the environment

Travel to destinations outside the town is more varied than it is solely within the town. The town and its residents have access to several other types of transportation facilities. Water, rail, air, and bus facilities are located either in the town or in nearby communities. The Hudson River, which bounds Rhinebeck on the west, has a deep-water channel for ocean-going vessels as far north as Albany. Deep draft vessels can be berthed at private facilities in Beacon, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, and Kingston. There are public launches for small boats at Poughkeepsie, Staatsburg, Rhinecliff, and Tivoli. There are also private boat clubs in most riverfront communities. Rhinebeck recently upgraded its public dock and launch ramp facilities

in Rhinecliff. The dock is accessible to medium draft vessels and the ramp is designed for small to medium boats on trailers. Parking is limited to just a few trailers at that location.

Amtrak, the nationwide rail passenger line, provides service from stations at Poughkeepsie and Rhinecliff. Metro-North Commuter Railroad, a subsidiary of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, provides passenger service from Grand Central Station in New York City on two lines to the southern half of Dutchess County. The Harlem Line in eastern Dutchess County runs as far north as Amenia with stops at Dover Plains, Wingdale and Pawling. In the western part of the county the Hudson Line serves Poughkeepsie, New Hamburg, and Beacon.

Amtrak service has attracted new residents to Rhinecliff and the town, including many part-time residents. The rail lines have been improved to carry high-speed trains. This and other factors have made Rhinecliff and the town more accessible from the New York metropolitan area. The existing parking facilities near the Rhinecliff station have been improved in recent years but are still considered inadequate to serve the current needs of residents. Metro-North has initiated plans to upgrade its service to Northern Dutchess. Expansion of Metro-North to Rhinecliff could have profound negative effects on the community.

The major airport in the county, the Dutchess County Airport, is located in the northwest corner of Wappinger. Commuter air service is almost non-existent now that Stewart Airport provides service from Newburgh to points around the country. Other airport facilities in the County include Stormville Airport in East Fishkill, Sky Acres Airport in Union Vale, and the Sky Park Airport and the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, both in Red Hook. Sky Park, slightly more than a mile north of Rhinebeck on Route 199, is a small private airfield. The Aerodrome, on Rhinebeck's northern border, is an area attraction featuring antique planes and air shows but no public air transportation. There is a helipad at the Hospital for emergency uses but no other formal heliport facilities elsewhere in Town, although the Rhinebeck Fairgrounds could be used in the event of an emergency.

Bus service in the Town of Rhinebeck is provided by the Dutchess County LOOP System and private lines. The LOOP System provides both express (commuter) and mid-day service throughout the county. Rhinebeck residents are served by a LOOP commuter route, which operates Monday through Friday and serves the Tivoli to Poughkeepsie corridor (Express A). Midday service runs Monday through Saturday and also connects Tivoli to Poughkeepsie. All LOOP buses can be hailed or will stop along their routes where the bus can stop safely. The LOOP service will provide stops at the Stop & Shop.

In addition to these four routes, the Northwest Special Express provides service to sheltered workshops for handicapped residents. This bus runs from eastern Rhinebeck to workshops run by the Association for Retarded Children (ARC) in LaGrange and Rehabilitation Programs Inc. (RPI) in Poughkeepsie.

Mountain View Coach Lines and Shortline also provide service both within Dutchess County and to various regional destinations, including New York City. In addition, van shuttles provide transportation to the three major airports in the New York metropolitan region.

The County operated Dial-A-Ride service has been suspended in the Town but efforts are underway to provide for the transportation needs of the elderly. This is a service that is arranged on a town-by-town basis throughout the County. The service provides door-to-door transportation for eligible handicapped and senior residents.

Dutchess County has one interstate highway, 1-84, which connects the county with New England to the east and to Pennsylvania and other points to the west. The major north-south roads in Dutchess County are Route 22 in the Harlem Valley, the Taconic State Parkway in the middle of the county, and Route 9, which parallels the Hudson River from Fishkill to Red Hook and passes through the commercial development in the Town centered on Route 9 and also

passes through the village of Rhinebeck. Each of these roads connects the county with major highways to the north and south. Other major roads in the northwestern part of the county include Route 9G, Route 199, and Route 308. Additional state highways and a network of county roads assist in connecting the diverse areas of Dutchess County. There are three bridges that cross the Hudson River and connect Dutchess County with Orange and Ulster Counties. The Newburgh-Beacon Bridge, Mid-Hudson Bridge at Poughkeepsie, and Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge in northern Rhinebeck are important links in the vehicle transportation system.

The roads are provided by various levels of government and perform different functions for their users. The Town of Rhinebeck has jurisdiction over the majority of the roads in the town with more than 55 miles of roads under its control. These roads are used primarily for access to residential dwellings and neighborhoods. The Dutchess County Department of Public Works (DPW) owns and maintains 13.66 miles of roads within the town. Most of the county roads are designed to collect traffic from residential streets and funnel it to elements of the regional highway system. County roads also serve as connectors between adjacent communities and provide intra-county transportation links. The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) has primary responsibility for the regional highway network. The state has jurisdiction over 20.13 miles of roads in Rhinebeck.

Rhinebeck has good vehicular access to the county and regional road network. Route 9, Route 9G, Route 199 and Route 308 all pass through the town of Rhinebeck with Routes 9 and 9G serving north/south traffic and Routes 199 and 308 serving east/west movement. The east end of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge is in the northwest corner of the town, which adds to the strategic location of the town.

Town roads provide for multiple uses and are one of the most under appreciated areas for social interaction within the community. In fact, the town's roads are the only public facilities that exist for most of the town's residents near their dwellings. While the village and hamlet play the most important roles for social activities in the town, roads also double as areas for recreation and alternative transportation, in addition to community interaction and residential access. Residents regularly walk, stroll, hike, bicycle, skateboard, in-line skate, and run on town roads.

Most town roads were built before the Second World War and are considered historic. Many have been in constant use since the 1700's and some even dating back to 1686, when Rhinebeck was first settled by Europeans. The rural charm and attractiveness of the town's roads derives principally from their multiple functions, their scenic attributes, and historic character. Together, these qualities give them a rural appeal lacking in more modern roads, built post-World War II or "modernized" since that time. Some of these historic roads are quite narrow but are still capable of adequately and safely accommodating traffic. For instance, Miller Road is generally 16 feet wide and the newly constructed Miller Road Bridge is just 14.5 feet wide. Maintaining narrower roads in Rhinebeck is consistent with the *Guidelines for Rural Town and County Roads: Report to the Governor and the Legislature* discussed below in the Regional Plans subsection (# 14.1) as well as the recommendations of the Dutchess County Planning Department, the Dutchess Roadside Council as well as numerous planning and engineering organizations.

Our current road standards evolved from the immediate post-World War II period when communities began to pave streets and highways, necessitating the adoption of street construction standards and specifications. These standards and specifications were patterned after readily available state highway department standards, which were occasioned by increasingly heavy truck traffic and a concern in the post-war era about evacuation in the event of a nuclear attack. The conventional practice assumed that bigger was better. Wide roads were designed to move traffic in greater volumes and at increased speeds. While these standards may

have been reasonable for major thoroughfares (also known as arterials and collector roads), they were excessive for residential roads.

The traffic characteristics of residential roads and their construction and maintenance requirements differ significantly from arterial and collector roads. The origin of current residential road requirements in highway standards is still apparent. For instance, many rural communities require pavement widths in excess of what is necessary for the safe passage of cars and emergency vehicles. Planning and engineering studies have consistently found that residential street standards, based upon the older models, are unsafe because such streets are designed to accommodate traffic speeds of at least **15 miles per hour faster than the posted speed limit**. Not surprisingly, those same planning and engineering studies have also found there is a direct correlation between the width of a road, the speeds that vehicles travel, and the number of pedestrians severely injured or killed. The chart from the US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control below shows this correlation.

In the past, residential streets have been mistakenly viewed by many communities as fulfilling only three functions: providing access, providing on-street parking, and conveying traffic. As a consequence, requirements and design guidelines have placed undue stress on traffic efficiency and have ignored the many other functions of residential streets. As stated in *Performance Streets* (Bucks County Planning Commission, 1980):

“It was often forgotten that residential streets become part of the neighborhood and are eventually used for a variety of purposes for which they were not designed. Residential streets provide direct auto access for the occupant to his home; they carry traffic past his home; they provide a visual setting, an entryway for each house; a pedestrian circulation system, a meeting place for the residents, a play area (whether one likes it or not) for children, etc. To design and engineer residential streets solely for the convenience of easy automobile movement overlooks the many overlapping uses of a residential street.”



In recognition of the inappropriateness of applying highway standards to residential neighborhoods, efforts were made, beginning in the late 1960s, to develop new residential street design guidelines that, unlike previous standards, were not based upon highway standards. In 1967, the Federal Highway Administration discontinued application of its street improvement standards after determining that excessively wide road standards added needlessly to the cost of roads. In 1974, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) published *Residential Streets: Objectives, Principles, and Design Considerations*, which discussed significant factors that should be considered in the design of residential streets. It focused on the relationship between the design of residential streets and their unique function, the cost-effectiveness of street design, and the role of streets in establishing a residential community's intimate scale.

In 1984 the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) published *Recommended Guidelines for Subdivision Streets*, which stressed four factors—safety, efficiency of service, livability, and economy—as

guides in the design of residential streets. Among the many principles that ITE derived from consideration of these factors, two are particularly notable: 1) local streets should be designed to discourage excessive speeds; and 2) the land area devoted to streets should be minimized. In 1990 the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) published *A Policy of Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*. Commonly called the AASHTO Greenbook, this manual is the definitive source of guidelines for local road design, and not only, as is often thought, for major roads and arterials. According to the AASHTO Greenbook, the single most important feature of residential street design is the ability for traffic moving in opposite directions to *share a single traveling lane*. These and other publications are based on the concept that the movement of vehicles is only one of a residential street's many functions. A residential street is also part of its neighborhood and provides a visual setting for homes as well as a meeting place for residents.

Residential Streets has recently been updated. In addition to the ASCE, NAHB, and ULI, the Third Edition of this publication now adds a fourth partner, the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE). *Residential Streets*, Third Edition (2001) is based on the premise that the design of a residential street should include not only its place in the transportation system, but also its role as part of a residential community's living environment. It recommends that in planning residential streets, communities should consider how the street contributes to a clearly defined sense of place. Street standards should permit flexibility in design based on the functional classification of the road. Interstate highways, for example, are designed for high-speed through traffic, while small residential roads are designed primarily for access. These roads should be considered part of the residential neighborhood of which they are a part, rather than part of the traffic system. Road widths for residential streets should be narrowed to avoid excessive stormwater runoff and heat buildup, create a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, and minimize street construction and maintenance costs.

Rather than widening town roads, as has been the prevailing policy for many years now, efforts should be made to reduce the negative effects of vehicle use and improve conditions for non-motorized road users. This includes such things as planting trees and shrubs closer to the road to slow down traffic rather than removing trees and other vegetation as is currently done. Stonewalls close to the road should be preserved and rebuilt where possible. Roundabouts at appropriate intersections should be installed where feasible. The ITE has declared creation of traffic calming measures as a priority for municipalities. Traffic calming has been in use by at least 350 municipalities around the nation over the past 30 years. The Public Opinion Survey has established that 98% of the respondents believed scenic roads (including unpaved roads) were very important or important, 97% believed trees along roads are very important or important, and 91 % strongly agree or agree with the statement that "Town roads should be designed and maintained so pedestrians and bicyclists can safely use them." These factors should become an integral policy guiding all decisions on matters related to roads.

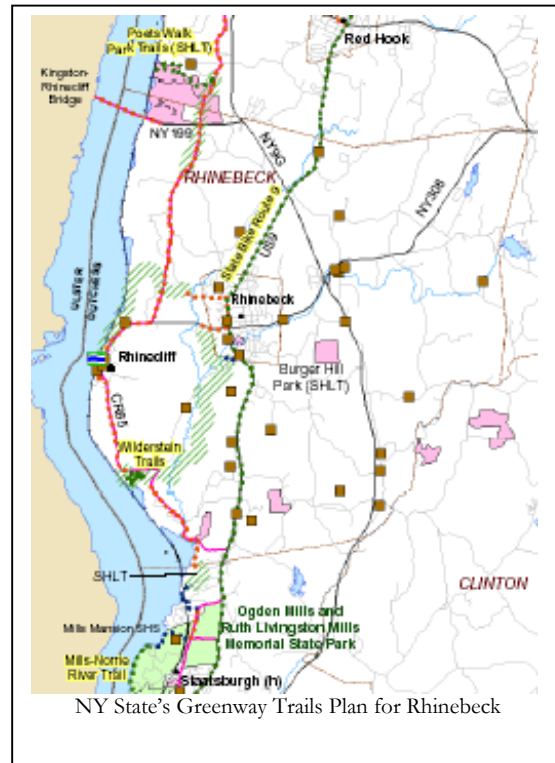
Vision: All new development should be pedestrian-friendly.

A walkable community is integral to achieving smart growth because: it enhances mobility by improving access to people without cars; reduces negative environmental impacts like water pollution and air quality; strengthens the local economy by lowering transportation costs and improving personal health and fitness; and supports a stronger community through improved social interaction.

Objective: Linkages between housing and destinations should be created, along with a trails map illustrating them.

Actions:

1. Require all new subdivision applications to include provisions for hiking, biking and walking paths and where appropriate, bicycle paths or dedicated bicycle lanes. Design the trails to link them to other trail networks and eventually, to such destinations as the village.
2. Require sidewalks in new developments, so that residents are able to move safely and pleasantly, without an automobile. Provide linkages to other sidewalks.
3. Require public access for hiking, biking and walking trails in new developments.
4. Require traffic calming techniques (like 25 mph speed limits and planting of trees close to the roads), in new development, to effectively reduce and enforce traffic speeds, and to make roads more pedestrian-friendly.
5. Create and adopt a hiking, biking and walking trails map as an official town map, and display it in Town Hall for use by the public and the Planning Board during the review of subdivision and site plan applications. Include the open space plan on the town map, and coordinate with the planning efforts of regional Greenway trails.
6. Work with developers to create segments of hiking, biking and walking trails identified on the trails map during subdivision and site plan review of affected parcels.



Objective: A road system which is as free as possible from negative impacts, and safe for all who use it: drivers and their passengers, walkers and bicyclers, among others, should be created and maintained.

Actions:

1. Develop an Official Map identifying all existing and proposed roads, trails and parks, using it to ensure that all future roads and traffic patterns are safe and convenient and that future parks and trails are consistent with The Rhinebeck Plan recommendations.
2. Create a Transportation Safety Committee to develop and promote programs which minimize vehicular traffic volume, including those that



Rural roundabouts can be used as safe, attractive and viable alternatives to traffic signals and as a way to slow traffic

support, increase and facilitate transit (bus), rideshare (carpooling and vanpooling), pedestrian and bicycle transportation, and telecommuting. Include such educational efforts as the creation of an Alternative Transportation Booklet to disseminate information on alternative transportation modes. Ensure regular meetings of the Transportation Safety Committee, in order to discuss existing and proposed transportation programs and projects. Urge the Committee to work closely with the state and county, the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council, the Hudson River Valley Greenway and other agencies responsible for transportation. Mandate the Committee to plan for appropriate traffic calming measures to be installed on town, county, and state roads in the town – such measures to be based upon those recommended in *Traffic Calming: State of the Practice*, published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and Federal Highway Administration. Work with the State DOT and County Public Works Department to provide input on their plans and incorporate resident input as well.

3. Amend the town Highway Specifications to be consistent with The Rhinebeck Plan, with *Residential Streets* (Third Edition) published by the Urban Land Institute, National Association of Homebuilders, American Society of Civil Engineers, and Institute of Transportation Engineers, as well as other state-of-the-art transportation planning techniques such as Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods published by Walkable Communities, Inc.
4. Work with State DOT, Dutchess County Department of Planning and other agencies to develop a roundabout at the intersection of State Routes 9 and 9G, in order to alleviate traffic pressures there. Explore other appropriate locations for roundabouts on State, County and town roads.
5. Provide sidewalks, crosswalks and crosswalk signals along existing or potential walking routes near schools, places of worship, parks, and other community gathering places, and leading into the village and the hamlet of Rhinecliff.
6. Create off-street walking and bicycle paths, as opportunities arise, to link neighborhoods to each other, to the hamlet of Rhinecliff, to the village and to surrounding towns.
7. Work with DOT to create safer town roads by establishing a townwide speed limit, by establishing a 25 MPH limit on historic town roads and by eliminating future widening of town roads where no parking is expected. Do not exceed an 18-foot pavement width, which is more than adequate for low-volume rural roads. Allow for increased pavement width only where bicycle lanes are clearly designated. Establish means for the Highway Department to work with residents living on town roads affected by planned improvements to have input on such plans.



Residential streets with large setbacks and no street trees look so wide that they induce higher speeds.



Narrower residential streets lined with trees provide a pedestrian scale and sense of enclosure to help slow traffic.

8. Adopt standards for bicycle routes, lanes, and paths, consistent with applicable State DOT standards.
9. Include planning for pedestrian and bicycle movements when authorizing road building and improvement projects – especially when specific destination points are involved, such as connecting schools and parks with residential areas.

10. Place tighter limitations on traffic speed on Rhinebeck's historic roads, including bicycle/scenic corridor designation and signage, where appropriate. Set weight limits on these roads to avoid impacts from heavy truck traffic.
11. Establish design standards for bicycle routes for town roads in order to encourage cycling activity.
12. Permit private roads and common driveways in conservation subdivisions. Ensure that the road maintenance burdens on homeowners are not excessively costly and are appropriately shared by drafting legally binding and recorded use and maintenance documents in specifications for private roads and common driveways.
13. Review town regulations regarding access specifications for private roads and driveways which relate to length, slope, width, materials and drainage, both for safety and aesthetic concerns.
14. Require developers to create interior access connecting parking lots, internal service roads, and shared accesses, where possible, on all future commercial development along Routes 9 and 9G.
15. Encourage pedestrian access to commercial areas from nearby residential areas by requiring and planning for the installation of sidewalks at the time of site plan review.
16. Consider merger of the town and village highway departments. In conjunction with any potential merger, consider the development of affordable housing on the village owned highway garage property together with development of a park/natural area along the Landsman's Kill.

Objective: Maintain a town-wide road system which is sensitive to rural, historic and scenic resources, protecting Rhinebeck's unique environmental amenities.

Actions:

1. Work with local land trusts to secure conservation easements along scenic roads in the community.
2. Reverse the town policy to remove trees and widen all remaining town roads, involving local residents and businesses in planning traffic calming efforts in conjunction with re-paving operations. Consult with local residents and businesses about potential tradeoffs involved in centerline rumble strips, tight turning *radii*, speed humps, stop signs and neck downs, among other initiatives – each of which solutions have consequences.¹
3. Work with the New York State Department of Transportation to eliminate their current long-range plan to widen Route 9G throughout the town and to ensure that Routes 9 and 9G are not “improved” at the expense of the Town's rural character.
4. Work with the State Department of Transportation to find ways to reduce the area of highway on Route 9 south of the village, currently four lanes and not needed for capacity or safety. Reduce this overly wide highway back to its original two lanes, together with dedicated and separate bicycle lanes linking the village of Rhinebeck south to Hyde Park (and eventually connecting with Red Hook along a separate bicycle lane on the Hucklebush Line north of the village).
5. Narrow overly wide residential roads by providing bicycle lanes and/or planting strips.
6. Avoid sidewalk installation along scenic corridors or areas comprising unique woodland or rural



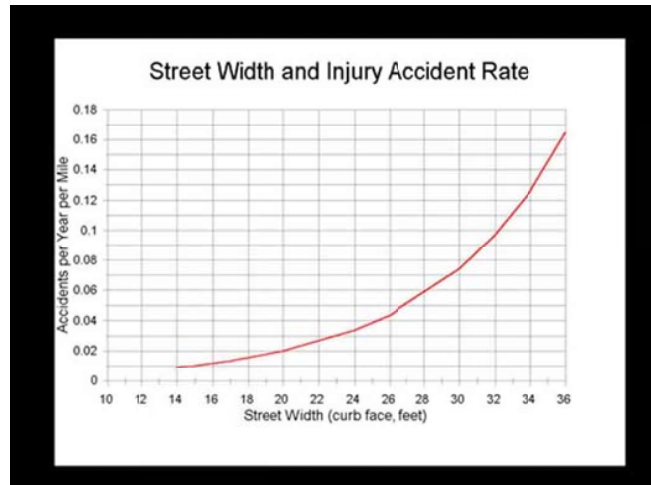
According to the Local Government Commission, injury severity, in relation to speed, has dire consequences for pedestrians

- character; instead, evaluate the clearing of brush alongside the road, in order to allow a pedestrian to walk outside the path of on-coming vehicles.
7. Develop rural and scenic road standards to guide the maintenance and preservation of historic town roads in conjunction with their designation as CEAs².
 8. Officially designate roads with significant natural, cultural and scenic resources, and adopt a scenic roads program to protect and enhance these corridors. Candidates for local scenic road designation include the most attractive portions of the roads identified for CEA designation.³ Include policies for ensuring such protection and enhancement of scenic roads in the program, as preserving the tree canopy, stone walls, stone culverts, hedgerows, significant old trees and other important elements in the roadside scenery, as well as restricting signage and inappropriate fencing and encouraging tree planting. Ensure that the program also assesses the carrying capacity of the road and establishes density limits, so that capacity is not exceeded by future development and that potential for road widening is eliminated.
 9. Design new roads to enhance scenic character and the rural appearance of the community. Avoid wide asphalt roads and concrete curbing. Build each road to match the function and traffic volume that it will serve. Limit width to be no greater than necessary for the safe movement of motor vehicles. Incorporate traffic calming techniques in road design to encourage safe driving and pedestrian use. Ensure that road layout avoids impacts to adjoining properties and respects and preserves the topography, stonewalls, flora and other natural and cultural features adjoining it.
 10. Maintain the scenic and historic character of intersections, stone culverts, and bridges in the town. Carefully plan any changes, especially to the intersections of Mt. Rutsen and River Roads and Ryan and River Roads.
 11. Work with the State Department of Transportation, Dutchess County Public Works and the Rhinebeck Highway Department to encourage the use of newly approved wooden guide rails, as opposed to the steel rails presently in use. In cases where wooden rails are proven to be inadequate for safety reasons, use box beam Corten steel as an alternative choice.
 12. Initiate a planting program at the Town Highway Garage to buffer and enhance the overall site.
 13. Disallow the clearing of healthy trees within town rights-of-ways beyond three to five feet of the pavement edge. Plant trees within road rights-of-way as an ideal method of traffic calming.
 14. Cut lower limbs of trees to ensure drivers' sight distance, as opposed to cutting down trees entirely.
 15. Urge the Planning Board and Town Board to work closely with the New York State Department of Transportation, Dutchess County Department of Public Works, Village Highway Department and Town Highway Department to coordinate all road projects and ensure consistency with The Rhinebeck Plan. Take an active role in all regional transportation planning to ensure the consideration of local priorities.
 16. Explore the pros and cons of restructuring of the Highway Department from an elected to an appointed Superintendent position.
 17. Investigate alternatives to the use of road salt⁴ on town roads and encourage the County and State to do likewise.
 18. Consider installation of stop signs or other traffic calming devices in Rhinecliff, (especially along Kelly Street and Orchard Street) to slow down traffic in the hamlet.

Objective: A safe and hospitable infrastructure for residents and visitors who prefer such alternatives to automobile use as bicycles, walking and/or public transportation should be created.

Actions:

1. Continue to coordinate bike planning with the county and the state.
2. Require bike racks and amenities for commercial sites, schools, parks and public facilities. Encourage shopping locations along bicycle routes to provide bike racks, as well as bike lanes in their driveways and parking lots. Work with the School District to provide bike paths next to their driveways and parking lots, as well as separated bike paths along routes leading to school entrances.
3. Increase public awareness of the town-wide bicycle network by posting standardized, weatherproof maps along bike routes, particularly where bicycle paths intersect and at trail-way entrances. Create and publish a bicycle network map and make it available at Town Hall, Village Hall, at the libraries and in schools.
4. Encourage the Planning Board to consider applicants' installation of bicycle racks during site plan review.
5. Encourage the proposed Transportation Safety Committee to promote bicycle and walking commuting by identifying routes in a Pedestrian and Bicyclist Master Plan brochure.
6. Include potential development of the former Hucklebush Rail Line as a rail-trail in all future project reviews and studies by the town.
7. Establish public access to the existing trails on town-owned lands in the town of Red Hook.
8. Promote bike safety programs for children.
9. Inventory road signs and consolidate them when feasible to avoid clutter, confusion and visual blight to roadscares.



Studies have shown a direct correlation between street width and injury accident rates.

Objective: Support the further development of road-based mass transportation in the town. Support the provision of bus shelters at appropriate locations.

Actions:

1. Address the potential for public transit during the Planning Board's review of proposed residential and non-residential developments.
2. Mandate the proposed Transportation Safety Committee to work with LOOP Bus System and other bus companies to increase the number of bus stops in the town.
3. Improve amenities at LOOP bus stop locations, including shelters, kiosks, benches, route maps and trash receptacles -- particularly at those lacking weather protection and those with minimal waiting space.

4. Reintroduce the Dial-A-Ride program.

Objective: Ensure that any improvements to rail service reflect the Town's desire to limit new service to preserve the Town's rural, non-commuter suburb, character.

1. Work with Amtrak to ensure that the Rhinecliff Train Station continues to function as a local, as opposed to a regional station.⁵
2. Work with Metro-North to ensure that they do not establish commuter train service to Rhinebeck in order to avert unmanageable population growth.

Objective: Address infrastructure issues particular to Rhinecliff and craft solutions to improve current problems and avoid future ones.

Actions:

1. Appoint an *ad hoc* committee of Rhinecliff residents to address traffic and parking challenges in the hamlet and to make recommendations about how to solve them.
2. Study the potential for a connection of the north parking lot at the Train Station with Slate Dock Road to reduce traffic congestion in the hamlet. Enforce existing parking requirements and increase penalties for illegal parking. Consider the use of shuttle buses to accomplish a reduction in traffic congestion.
3. Make every effort to ensure that the Rhinecliff Train Station remains a local transit access point as opposed to a regional transit destination, due to Rhinecliff's modest size and scale and the enormous pressures that would be placed on the hamlet if the Station were to serve an increasingly larger population. Town officials should work closely with the responsible transportation agencies and the New York State Department of Transportation to ensure that plans for additional parking and any future shuttle or bus services are limited in scope, so that the station remains a local stop, only.
4. Seek community development or other funds for sidewalks where appropriate in the hamlet.
5. Encourage the use of parking fees at the Rhinecliff Train Station, in order to discourage the use of the parking lot by non-residents.



Rhinecliff Station

¹ Negative consequences of these traffic-calming measures may include noise, air pollution and traffic pileups, for example.

² See "Community Character" section/pages 1.8-1.10, for the list of roads designated as CEAs.

³ See "Community Character" section/pages 1.8-1.10, for the list of roads designated as CEAs.

⁴ According to Discovery Magazine (December 2005), "*The wintertime salting of roads could leave rural freshwater streams and lakes in the northeastern US toxic to wildlife and unfit for human consumption within a century, say environmental scientists.*"

⁵ See also "Community Character" section/pages 1.13-1.14 for additional recommendations on the Train Station, including parking in the hamlet.

Natural Resources

A community's character is defined by various scenes in the landscape, both built and non-built features. The natural landscape – forests, wetlands, meadows, and rock outcrops and the working landscape, farms, play a prominent role in how residents perceive their sense of place and what makes it special for them. These landscapes, which are closely related to one another, offer many positive images of rural character, including stonewalls, trees along roads, open and planted fields, farm animals, vistas, historic sites, wildlife, rivers and streams, and mountains to name a just a few resources of environmental significance.

Our natural and working landscapes provide a variety of functions in a community – from signifying "small town feel" to the cleansing of water. For example, natural features often create a visual context, a signal that differentiates the "settled" area – a village or hamlet – from the rural countryside. Vegetative stream buffers help to reduce erosion, provide wildlife habitat and pathways and moderate stream water temperatures; wooded areas clean the air; and wetlands and fields aid in the groundwater recharge process.

The natural assets in a community can be planned for in a manner that is gaining notoriety as "green infrastructure – a network of protected land and water that maintains farmlands and ecological processes, supports biodiversity and sustains air and water resources. Communities typically plan for standard infrastructure needs, such as roads, schools, water and sewer comprehensively, so that they are developed in an organized and fiscally responsible fashion. Many communities now recognize the value of their "green infrastructure," and are beginning to plan, design and invest in those assets, as well.

Finally, one should not overlook the economic value of a community's natural assets. Natural and working landscapes are tax-positive in terms of the amount of tax dollars generated, in comparison to the services required for the municipality and the school district. Protecting groundwater resources costs far less than attempting the difficult, if not impossible, task of remediating contaminated wells. Communities with abundant natural resources are often tourist destinations for such recreational activities as fishing, hiking, birding, pick your own farms and visiting historic/cultural sites. These types of activities infuse a local economy with dollars spent on merchandise, restaurants and lodging.

Rhinebeck is an excellent example of a community capitalizing on its environmental resources through tourism.

Important Planning Concern

Important ecological factors to consider when protecting open space are the ecological services provided. Flood control, watershed and aquifer protection, oxygen production, biologic and genetic diversity, natural pest and disease control, formation of topsoil, maintenance of soil fertility, and erosion control are just a few examples of the services that are provided to the community -- simply because the forests, fields, and wetlands exist. Few if any human-made substitutes can truly supply the diverse array of benefits that flow from nature. Ecosystem values have been estimated to be as high as \$7,924 per acre/per year for wetlands and floodplains, alone.¹ These factors are extremely important ones for communities from an economic, as well as ecological, perspective.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

If environmental resources are to be protected, they must first be identified and analyzed. For The Rhinebeck Plan, information was gathered for a resource inventory from several sources, and compiled using a computerized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database. GIS is an information system designed to efficiently store, retrieve, manage, analyze, display, and output geographically referenced data. The basic functions of a GIS include computer mapping, spatial and attribute queries, proximity analysis, feature location, spatial overlay, and thematic mapping. The following describes the important environmental resources that have been identified to date within Rhinebeck. The resources identified in the Plan are not all-inclusive, since they have been identified on a town-wide basis. As development applications are filed with the town, it is imperative that detailed, on-site studies be conducted to ensure that all environmental resources are properly identified on each parcel, and their significance assessed. This site-specific information should then be used by decision makers to ensure appropriate protection measures are taken.

Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands exist where the water table is at or near the land surface for most of the year. Regardless of their size, all wetlands serve a wide number of valuable ecological functions, including but not limited to, water purification during groundwater recharge, stormwater retention and flood control and wildlife habitat. They are some of the most critical areas for biodiversity in a natural landscape. However, wetlands have been and are continuing to be filled at an alarming rate and both the wetlands and their many important functions can be easily degraded or lost entirely by the direct impacts of filling, construction of roads and other development activities, and through such other indirect impacts as run-off from paved areas and other discharges.

Wetlands are afforded some degree of protection at the state and federal levels. Under the New York State Freshwater Wetlands Act of 1975, the New York State Department of

¹ Costanza, Robert. *The Value of the World's Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital*, *Nature*, May 15, 1997. Cited in Hawken, Paul, Lovins, Amory B. and L. Hunter. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, 1999.

Environmental Conservation (DEC) maps and regulates wetlands encompassing at least 12.4 acres (5 hectares), and smaller wetlands judged to be of unusual importance. The DEC also regulates a 100-foot adjacent area (buffer zone) surrounding the protected wetlands. All of the DEC-protected freshwater wetlands in the town have been mapped by the State and such maps are on file at the town clerk's office.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also protects wetlands, regardless of size, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Some of these wetlands have been identified on maps prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, entitled "National Wetland Inventory" (NWI). However, unlike the mapped DEC wetlands, the Corps of Engineers regulates all "waters of the United States," whether they have been mapped or not. Therefore, it is essential that on-site surveys be conducted by a qualified professional before any development activities are contemplated. The NWI maps are merely an indication of where wetlands have been identified on the basis of high altitude aerial photographs, alone, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cautions users of the NWI maps:



Wetlands provide numerous environmental and community benefits.

There is a margin of error inherent in the use of aerial photographs. Thus, a detailed on the ground and historical analysis of a single site may result in a revision of the wetland boundaries established through photographic interpretation. In addition, some small wetlands and those obscured by dense forest cover may not be included on this document...Persons intending to engage in activities involving modifications within or adjacent to wetland areas should seek the advice of appropriate Federal, State or local agencies concerning specified agency regulatory programs and proprietary jurisdictions that may affect such activities.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service, in a report released in 2002 on isolated wetlands notes, "Wetlands may be connected with waterbodies or surrounded by dry land. Although the latter appear to be separated from surface waters, many 'isolated' wetlands are actually linked hydrologically to other wetlands or streams by subsurface flows." Thus, the federal wetlands identified in The Rhinebeck Plan should not be substituted for a detailed, on-site identification by a qualified professional and federal, state and local government officials.

As shown on Figure 9.1, a total of 39 state regulated and 46 federally regulated wetlands (some of which overlap), are located in the town and village of Rhinebeck. Together, the regulated wetlands make up approximately 11 percent of the town and village. Many more wetlands that are considered "isolated" are also found in the town, but these wetlands are not currently subject to either state or federal regulations. Isolated wetlands were subject to federal jurisdiction prior to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in January 2001. This case, involving an isolated pond, invalidated the Corps of Engineer's "migratory bird rule" as a basis for regulating wetlands that have no connection to a navigable waterway. It is not known what the extent is of "isolated" wetlands within the town, since these wetlands are normally identified on a parcel-by-parcel basis, and may involve some vernal pools, which exist largely after snowmelt in the spring. Vernal pools in particular, are significant because they are productive breeding areas for a variety of amphibians.

According to a recent nation-wide study funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency, approximately 29 percent of wetland types may be considered “geographically isolated,” and are not subject to federal regulation. Other findings of the study include:

- ❑ *“A total of 274 at-risk plant and animal species are supported by isolated wetlands, with more than one-third (35%) apparently restricted to these wetland types. At-risk animal species are even more closely tied to isolated wetlands; more than one-half of at-risk animals considered in this study appear to be obligate to isolated wetland habitats.*
- ❑ *A total of 86 plant and animal species listed as threatened, endangered, or candidates under the Endangered Species Act are supported by isolated wetland habitats. This represents about 5% of all plant and animal species currently listed under the Act. A majority (52%) of these listed species are completely dependent on isolated wetland habitat for their survival.*
- ❑ *Nearly half of isolated wetland types (35 of 81, or 43%) are known to support at least one listed species under the Endangered Species Act.*

States, tribes and local governments will increasingly be in a position to decide the fate of those isolated wetlands that no longer are protected under the Clean Water Act. The information and analyses contained in this study are designed to assist policy-makers and land managers at federal, state, and local levels to better understand their biodiversity value and plan for their conservation.”

In view of the lack of regulatory authority by the federal government to protect these important water resources, action should be taken at the local level. Once a wetland has been filled, it is lost forever. Many municipalities throughout New York State have enacted local wetlands laws since the 2001 Supreme Court decision. Rhinebeck should develop amendments to its Zoning Law before it is too late.

Rivers, Streams and Lakes

Perhaps the most notable feature of the town’s natural landscape is the Hudson River. With its outstanding scenic, historic and recreational amenities, the River is a treasure of the region, state and nation. Rhinebeck shares an eight-mile border along the Hudson, and there are six tidal coves providing important habitat for fish and other wildlife. All lands within Rhinebeck drain to the Hudson from several tributaries, as described below.

The Hudson is a source of water to the village and parts of the town, is a transportation corridor for both boating and the railroad (which lines its banks in the town), is a source of commerce for those businesses that depend upon its recreational amenities, and is also the location where the village and town of Rhinebeck dispose of sanitary wastes. The Hudson River has played an enormous role in the conservation and development of the community, and it will likely continue its critical role for the foreseeable future if the town and others take an active role in its conservation and protection.

Within New York, all fresh waters are classified by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as either “AA”, “A”, “B”, “C”, or “D”. Classes AA through B are regulated by the state. The highest classifications, AA or A are assigned to protect waters for uses that include drinking and cooking. Class B waters are protected for uses that include swimming and other recreational uses but not for drinking. Class C and D waters are not regulated and include uses such as fishing. Waters classified as A, B or C can also have an added standard of (I) or (IS). The (I) indicates the waters support or have the potential to support a trout population and (IS) means it supports or has the potential to support trout spawning. All waters that have a (I) or (IS) designation are regulated including those with a classification of C.

Each stream can have different classifications depending upon its characteristics and uses. For instance, the Landsman Kill has a classification in various reaches of C, C(T), and D. Periodically, the DEC reviews stream classifications, holds public hearings and reclassifies streams, necessary. Rhinebeck should make every effort to seek the highest classifications of all of its waters when the opportunity arises.

In addition to the regulated stream, an area 50 feet from the mean high water mark of the stream is also subject to the Protection of Waters regulations, and a permit may be necessary for any land disturbance activities. The town has a Water Resources Protection Overlay District (WRP-O) that requires Planning Board approval of a special use permit for development activities in, or within 100 feet of, certain streams and wetlands. The WRP-O also regulates land uses in designated aquifer areas.

The water quality classes for surface waters within the town of Rhinebeck are provided in the following table. Streams and lakes are shown in Figure 9.2

Waterbody	Classification
Hudson River	B
Sepasco Lake	B
Muddler Kill	D
Rhinebeck Kill	D
Fallsburg Creek	D
Crum Elbow Creek	A & A(T)
Landsman Kill	C, C(T), & D

Floodplains

Floodplains are the lands adjacent to a waterway where floodwaters spill out of the banks of a stream. Floodplains are characterized as either 100-year floodplains or 500-year floodplains. A 100-year floodplain has a one in one hundred (1 %) chance of occurring in any one year while a 500-year floodplain a one in five hundred (0.5 %) chance of occurring in any one year. Both zones in the town are depicted on Figure 9.3 at the end of this Chapter.

Floodplains provide many beneficial functions including reducing the severity of a flood, handling severe stormwater runoff, filtering nutrients and impurities, controlling sedimentation and creating rich alluvial soils. They offer diverse habitat areas for fish and wildlife by serving as feeding and breeding grounds and many wetlands are found in floodplains. Floodplain areas provide ideal opportunities for parks, trails, bikeways and areas for wildlife conservation. Development should avoid encroaching upon floodplains due to the loss of beneficial functions and resulting adverse impacts.

Watershed Areas

A watershed is a defined drainage basin consisting of an area of land, framed by ridgelines and areas of high ground, that drain to a water body or a specific point in a river system. Watersheds can be as large as the Hudson River watershed, spanning five states, or as small as the Landsman Kill watershed, which is confined to the town and small areas in Red Hook and Milan. Watersheds provide three major functions related to hydrology and ecology: 1) transport

and storage of water, 2) cycling and transformation, and 3) ecological succession. These functions provide natural water quality treatment by permitting suspended particles to settle out and allow for biological and chemical reactions to break down impurities as water infiltrates soils.

It is important to understand that every activity on land affects a watershed and these activities can alter water quantity and quality by interfering with the functions of the watershed. Figure 9.4 illustrates watershed functions.

As can be seen from Figure 9.5 at the end of this Chapter, the Landsman Kill drains the largest area of the town of Rhinebeck. A subwatershed that drains directly to the Hudson River is second in land area. The northeast section of the town drains into the Saw Kill through Red Hook, and the southeastern section drains into the Crum Elbow Creek through Hyde Park.

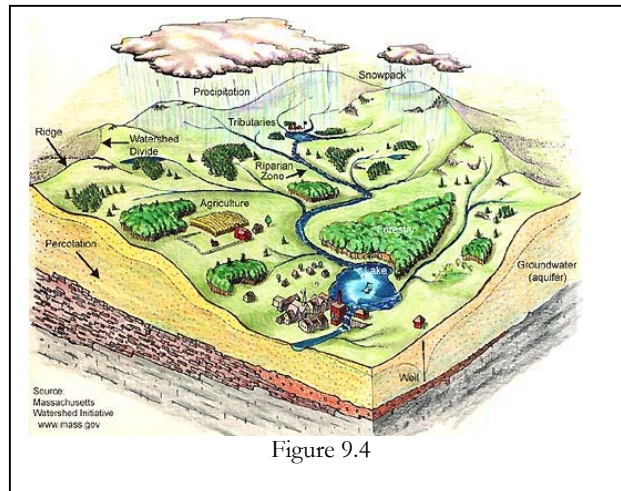


Figure 9.4

Aquifers

Groundwater is a critical source of drinking water for rural towns like Rhinebeck and is the main source of supply for almost the entire town. The village obtains its water from the Hudson River and there are just a few contract users in the town who purchase their water from the village.

Groundwater is comprised of the portion of rainfall that does not run off to streams and rivers and that does not evaporate or transpire from plants. This water percolates down through the soil until it reaches a saturation point, also known as the water table. Groundwater can be found in areas of saturated rock and soil formations, typically in sand and gravel as well as bedrock. Water is stored in voids within the rock and soil, and the amount of water available depends upon the number and size of the voids that exist there.

An aquifer is simply an underground formation that will yield a usable amount of water to a well. Aquifers are natural reservoirs that are significantly linked to surface water, making them vulnerable to both point and non-point pollution. While water quantity does not appear to be an issue in Rhinebeck, the town of Hyde Park to Rhinebeck's south has had the experience of private wells running dry, and some locations have experienced groundwater contamination rendering wells unusable. Perhaps more importantly, clean drinking water is a public health issue and many Dutchess County communities, including Hyde Park, have had to contend with contaminated water supplies. The cost to clean up a polluted aquifer is generally high, and sometimes prohibitively expensive. In many cases, alternative water supplies, like using treated water from the Hudson River, have needed to be brought on line. It is far better to prevent contamination in the first place by controlling land uses with the potential to pollute groundwater and to educate residents on the consequences of polluted surface and groundwater.

The aquifers that exist in the town of Rhinebeck were identified by the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority in 1993 and are shown in Figure 9.6 at the end of this Chapter.

The aquifers were broken into three different zones of concern as follows:

Zone 1: This zone consists of permeable deposits (like sand and gravel) directly overlying the aquifer. Contaminants can move directly downward to the underlying aquifer with little or no natural filtration by the soil because the water is moving too quickly.

Zone 2: Less permeable deposits located up gradient from the aquifer. These areas contribute recharge to the aquifer through both overland runoff and through ground water flow. Contaminant pathways are generally longer and slower in Zone 2 than Zone 1.

Zone 3: These areas contribute to a stream, which may subsequently be induced to contribute to the aquifer through infiltration.

Groundwater quality problems can render individual and community water supplies unusable. The slow movement and minimal attenuation of contaminants in groundwater, the impracticability of remediation, and the high cost of treatment or alternative supplies make prevention of contamination the only really effective means of protecting groundwater quality. While all aquifers are important to protect, Zone 1 areas are the most important, due to their susceptibility to contamination. Since existing residents of the town that are served by groundwater wells have no alternatives if their wells become contaminated, all three zones should be properly protected. For an additional discussion of groundwater protection and the recommendations of Dutchess County for certain soil types, see the discussion below under Soils: Aquifer Recharge.

Soils

Dutchess County soil survey information is an essential factor in decisions related to a wide range of land use issues. This includes items such as: 1) the suitability of an area of land to support agriculture, site a septic system and buildings and construct roads; 2) its usefulness for construction materials; 3) its susceptibility to erosion; and 4) its suitability for the correct identification of wetlands and habitat types. Soils are divided into different series, and are characterized by parent material, texture, depth of soil, drainage class, depth to seasonal high water table, soil reaction, slope and many others properties. Soils of importance to The Rhinebeck Plan are described below.

HYDRIC SOILS

Hydric soils are defined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services as soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part. Hydric soils are one factor considered in identifying freshwater wetlands. Hydric soils are generally unsuitable for septic disposal systems. These soils are productive in terms of agriculture, and are utilized to produce hay and such root crops as beets, onions, carrots and cabbage. Development projects should avoid hydric soils due to their ecological importance, as well as their limitations for development (largely a high groundwater table). Figure 9.7 at the end of this chapter shows the extent of hydric soils in Rhinebeck.

SOIL SUITABILITY

Due to the very limited area serviced by community water and sewer in the town, soils were analyzed to determine their suitability for septic disposal systems. The analysis is based upon information from the Dutchess County Soil Survey and the staff from the Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District. Figure 9.8 at the end of this chapter shows soils divided into several categories representing various challenges related to the installation of an on-site septic system. Some of these challenges can be overcome with engineering practices that can be costly, but may be inappropriate to provide adequate water quality protection. The following provides a description of the soil categories and the challenge it represents:

- *Depth to Rock* – These are areas where there is a shallow depth from the ground surface to bedrock. Septic systems can sometimes be used in these types of soils. Often called "mound systems" or an above ground septic, these engineered septic systems require an extensive amount of fill to create a suitable absorption area above natural bedrock. These more complex systems require special attention to prevent compaction from occurring on the mound and erosion due to the slope of the mound.
- *Hydric Soils* – These are wet (saturated) soils, usually associated with wetland areas that limit the ability to absorb effluent and treat wastewater, due to a lack of suitable soils to protect groundwater.
- *Poor Filter* – Filtration refers to how fast water sinks into the soil below a drain field. If the percolation rate (also a measure of how fast water sinks into the soil) is too fast, then poor filtration of the effluent may occur. If poor filtration occurs, then there is potential for groundwater contamination.
- *Prime Farmland and Soils of Statewide Importance* – These soils are often attractive for septic systems because they provide suitable percolation rates. However, the more permeable of these soils may allow effluent to move quickly to the water table then through the aquifer, potentially allowing contaminants, such as nitrates, to rapidly reach wells and water bodies, unless sufficient recharge area is retained to adequately dilute the wastewater discharge.
- *Wetness, percs slowly* – Wetness refers to the depth to the water table. If the water table is high, there is the potential for it to invade the septic system or flood the drain field. Additionally, if the water table is too close to a drain field, there may not be enough suitable soil to filter microbes, degrade nutrients and provide renovation to the septic effluent. If the soils percolate slowly, then the system will not drain fast enough and there is potential for the system to back up.

Individual and community septic disposal systems will be the predominant means for accommodating additional development in the town outside of the priority growth areas. If Rhinebeck is to avoid the problems that have occurred elsewhere with septic systems, it is essential that development densities be appropriate to the soil conditions; that such systems are properly designed, sited, constructed and maintained; and that the town carefully control land uses that discharge into septic systems.

AQUIFER RECHARGE

In 1982, Dutchess County commissioned Robert Gerber to evaluate the county's aquifers and to recommend aquifer protection and sustainable use goals. The so-called "Gerber Report" quickly became a reference publication for every planner and engineer engaged in land development activities in the county. In 2005, the county commissioned Russell Urban-Meade

of Chazen Engineering to update the Gerber Report's estimated rates of aquifer recharge, and its method of calculating sustainable housing density thresholds.

The updated recharge rates are keyed to readily available Hydrologic Soil Groups that are periodically updated by the US Natural Resources Conservation Service. Based upon the soil groups, density thresholds have been calculated to ensure that all groundwater wells will remain potable in places where conventional septic systems and individual wells are used. The updated report is designed to be complimentary with existing Dutchess County Health Department regulations, such as separation distances between wells and septs. While the county regulates wells and septs to ensure bacteria and viral die-off, dissolved contaminants, such as nitrate in human wastes, are not prone to biological decay. According to the updated report, the density recommendations found below will provide greater assurance of sustainable groundwater use by Dutchess County residents. For a map illustrating the referenced soil groups, see Figure 9.8 at the end of this chapter.

Hydrologic Soil Group	General Description	Recharge Rate to Underlying aquifer	Local Density in Average Acres per Dwelling
A and A/D	Clean sandy or gravelly soils	19 inches/year	1.4 - 1.6
B and non-categorized soils	Sandy soils with some silt	14 inches / year	1.8 – 2.1
C and C/D	Silty soils	7 inches / year	3.4 – 3.7
D	Clay-rich soils	4 inches / year	5.6 – 6.4

Note: The County commissioned recommendations provided above are for average density not individual lot sizes and should be paired with cluster (open space) development.

Topography

Topography describes the vertical configuration of the land surface and its relation to the features in a landscape, both natural and man-made. One aspect of topography is called “relief.” It refers to the representation of the shapes of hills, valleys, streams, and other terrain features on the earth's surface. Rhinebeck is noted as having uniform relief, with the following exceptions described in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan:

- The steep banks along the Hudson River;
- The level and undulating area of central Rhinebeck; and
- The eastern third of the town where the land is generally higher and hillier with steep slopes scattered throughout

Figure 9.9 at the end of this Chapter depicts elevations in the town. In addition to showing the patterns of relief, the map identifies ridgelines worthy of protection.

Slope is another measure of topography that describes elevation change over a given horizontal distance. Slopes are often described in percentages – i.e., a 15 percent slope indicates that the ground rises 15 feet in elevation for every 100 feet in horizontal distance.

Figure 9.10 shows steep slopes in Rhinebeck in two categories – 15 percent to 25 percent, and those with greater than 25 percent slope. These areas are of concern because soil erodes readily, they are unsuitable for roads and driveways, and on-site septic systems cannot be sited on them. These areas, if disturbed, will require far greater maintenance over time than gentler slopes of less than 15 percent. Further, it is more difficult and costly to build in areas of steep slopes, and it is undesirable to build on slopes greater than 25 percent because of their long term water quality problems, the high costs of maintenance and because of the adverse visual blight caused

by the scars left in the land where steeper slopes are disturbed. The town has many areas of slope in the 15 percent to 25 percent category, with pockets of steeper slopes of greater than 25 percent appearing along the banks of the Hudson River, in the northeastern portion of the town and at various other locations scattered throughout Rhinebeck.

Biodiversity

Hudsonia Ltd., in their *Biodiversity Assessment Manual* describes biodiversity as follows:

Biological diversity or “biodiversity” can be defined most simply as “the variety of life and its processes.” The term refers to all the variation in nature, including ecosystems, biological communities, species, and their genes. It also refers to the interactions of organisms with each other, and with the non-biological components of their environments, such as soil, water, air, and sunlight.

Intact ecosystems help to create and support the world as we know it by providing such basic services as climate moderation, oxygen production, soil formation, nutrient transformation, and production and decomposition of organic matter.”

This broad definition of biodiversity includes not only species populations, but also the landscape functions and processes upon which species survival rests. Open space planning has often been based on important recreational and scenic values. More and more however, the preservation of biodiversity is increasingly seen as an important, if not the pivotal, aspect of open space planning to which recreational and aesthetic values are coupled.

Because maintaining high levels of biodiversity often means addressing habitat fragmentation, open space planning that includes biodiversity values can find its proper form in not only preserving larger open spaces, but through the creation of open space networks that allow for connectivity between areas of species richness. The Town Board retained Hudsonia, Inc. to conduct a town-wide biodiversity study, indicating its commitment to protecting Rhinebeck’s special environmental resources and special habitats. CAC members, together with Winnakee Land Trust staff, were trained to assist Hudsonia in identifying all areas of biodiversity in the town. The final report of the “Significant Habitat” study is included in Appendix 6 and Figure 9.11 at the end of this chapter shows the priority conservation areas with highest biodiversity.

The extinction of a single plant species may result in the disappearance of up to 30 other species of plants and wildlife.

US Forest Service

Environmental Constraints

The individual environmental constraints were superimposed over one another to create a “combined constraints” map (see Figure 9.12). This map was instrumental in identifying areas for future land uses (see Chapter 5) and is instructive here as it indicates the extent of environmental constraints within the Town of Rhinebeck.

Vision: The rural, scenic, natural, and historic character of the town should be protected.

Rhinebeck is renowned for its scenic beauty and bucolic open spaces, rural and historic character and outstanding quality of life. The town is also known for the care it takes to ensure that its nationally recognized resources are protected and preserved. We cannot preserve all remaining unprotected lands as open space, nor preserve, all at once, those lands which we can; however, in accordance with the mandate of an overwhelming majority of

Rhinebeck residents, we must find ways to protect as many remaining open space lands as are necessary to maintain Rhinebeck's rural character, quality of life, scenic resources and natural environment.

Objective: Important environmental resources ¹ should be protected for Rhinebeck's citizens and for future generations.

Actions:

1. Designate all perennial stream corridors and other surface water resources in the town as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs)².
2. Designate all aquifers and recharge zones in the town as CEAs.
3. Designate Ferncliff Forest,³ Snyder Swamp, Burger Hill Park and Vlei swamp as CEAs, and zone as Land Conservation Districts.
4. Use the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR),⁴ to the fullest extent of the law, to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts of proposed development projects on sensitive environmental resources.
5. Mandate open space or conservation subdivision⁵ on all lands. Open space subdivision should be subject to the four-step design process described in Chapter 5.
6. Identify the open space and natural resource inventories completed for The Rhinebeck Plan and the "Significant Habitat" study as the Conservation Open Areas Inventory and Conservation Open Areas Map, pursuant to General Municipal Law §239-y(1)(b) and (c) and designate the town's Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) as a Conservation Board (pursuant to General Municipal Law §239-y(2)) and empower the Board to review and make recommendations on development projects that have the potential to adversely affect natural, cultural and open space resources.
7. Adopt a town policy requiring an assessment of the conservation value of all town-owned lands or lands under its control, prior to either its potential development, transfer, lease, exchange or sale as "surplus," and seek advice from the Planning Board and CAC before taking action.

Objective: The concept of conservation should be integrated into the curricula of our schools and other educational institutions.

Actions:

1. Work with the School District to sponsor educational programs to teach school children about the importance of environmental stewardship and about the tools that can be used to clean up and protect the natural environment.
2. Encourage the schools to incorporate curriculum on the importance of planning, conservation, and development, including fiscal impacts of choices and transportation cohesion.
3. Consider undertaking a multi-year media outreach program, using a combination of PANDA, newspaper and Internet media for the purpose of educating residents about natural resource conservation efforts. The program should focus on one topic every four to six months.

Objective: Encourage the use of landscape elements to integrate new development with the surrounding area.

Actions:

1. Prepare design guidelines based upon the *Greenway Guides A1 through A4*, which addresses: vegetation clearing; retention of rural landscape elements, hedgerows and stands of trees; building placement and siting (especially near water bodies); use of farm roads and country

lanes; maintenance and enhancement of scenic views; sensitive siting of utilities; and use of farm conservation and development plans on active farmland, which allow homes to co-exist with farms.

2. Encourage use of native and non-invasive, non-native species for landscaping, and discourage the use of invasive plant species. Make information about native and invasive plants available at Town Hall, the libraries, and on the town's Web site. Stipulate that all new landscaping required in the Zoning Law (primarily for commercial sites) makes use of non-invasive native plants. Landscape all town-owned properties with non-invasive, native or non-invasive plants. Encourage the county and the state to plant native species alongside roadways, in roadway medians, or on other lands under their ownership or management.
3. Use design standards to define principles for siting houses around a site's natural features. Place buildings on the edges of fields next to woods, or on the slopes of ridges and hills, as situating a home in a highly visible location, such as the middle of an open field or on the crest of a hill, intrudes upon the rural landscape and detracts from scenic views.
4. In new subdivisions, discourage the conversion of indigenous plant life on a site to manicured lawns and gardens using non-native and/or non-indigenous plants by providing educational materials to residents and newcomers, alike. Set performance standards for the clearing of native vegetation in new subdivisions.
5. Work with developers, Winnakee Land Trust and other local land trusts to craft conservation easements that define areas of a site that are not to be disturbed.
6. Prepare guidelines for the design of deer fencing that would act as a deterrent to deer damage, and blend with the landscape, as well.
7. Amend the Communication Facilities and Towers Regulations in the Zoning Law to reduce the 150-foot tower allowance and to address the need for camouflage or use of existing structures to minimize visual impacts.



Ryan Road still retains many of the best characteristics of Rhinebeck's rural roads.

Objective: Preserve existing trees, wherever possible.

Actions:

1. Minimize the clearing of vegetation and preserve important vegetation and habitat by amending the Zoning Law to require the use of conservation subdivision design on parcels where forests or significant trees exist.
2. Amend the Zoning Law to require the integration of existing forested areas and significant trees into site plans for new residential and commercial development and establish generous landscaping requirements for all new development.
3. Work with New York State Department of Transportation, the County Department of Public Works, the town Highway Department and local public utilities to minimize the cutting of street trees.
4. Request that Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development map significant stands of forest, five acres and greater in size, as a tool for the Planning Board and CAC.
5. Initiate a tree replenishment initiative that plants a tree for each tree taken down for new development and road projects.
6. Urge that trees be planted alongside the road, where foliage might soften the landscape in front of such public buildings as the Town Garage.

7. Appoint a “Shade Tree Commission” to assist the town with implementation of The Rhinebeck Plan recommendations related to tree conservation.

Objective: Trees should be planted for new development.

Actions:

1. Amend the Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations to clearly require a minimum number and size of street trees and other landscaping in new developments. Plant native or non-invasive, non-native species which are appropriate to the town’s climate. Require bonding to be in place to guarantee successful tree growth for a three-year period. Carefully plan the location of street trees with regard to locations of utility infrastructure.
2. Recognize and honor individuals and companies who take the lead in planting and protecting trees.
3. Landscape plantings between roads, sidewalks and trails with salt-tolerant species, in order to provide shade trees and a buffer for pedestrians.
4. Establish a tree protection law that is cognizant of individual property and environmental concerns, and create a Replacement, Supplementation and Management Plan for trees along roads and on town properties. Initiate a planting program at the Town Highway Garage to buffer and enhance the overall site. (See also the recommendations for sustainable forestry below).
5. Initiate a Tree City USA application process with the National Arbor Day Foundation by following the steps at <http://www.arborday.org/programs/TreeCityStandards.cfm> to become a “Tree City”.

A UN report found that a third of amphibians and a fifth of mammals are threatened with extinction because of habitat destruction.

VISION: Lands suitable and necessary for surface and groundwater re-charge, biodiversity and wildlife habitat should be conserved.

Protecting open space allows for a number of ecological services to be provided by nature. Flood control, watershed and aquifer protection, oxygen production, biologic and genetic diversity, natural pest and disease control, formation of topsoil, maintenance of soil fertility and erosion control are just a few examples of the services that are provided to the community, free of charge, simply because the forests, fields, and wetlands exist. Few if any human-made substitutes can supply the diverse array of benefits that flow from nature. Ecosystem values have been estimated to be as high as \$7,924 per acre per year for wetlands and floodplains. These factors are extremely important from an economic, as well as an ecological perspective.

Objective: Conservation regulations to protect sensitive environmental resources for future generations should be created.

Actions:

1. Prepare conservation regulations to implement the natural resource inventory mapping prepared for The Rhinebeck Plan.
2. Design new conservation regulations to allow for development based upon the carrying capacity of the land, so that it is compatible with natural resources and preserves and protects ecosystems in their entirety. Accomplish this by minimizing fragmentation of the landscape, maintaining biodiversity and protecting unique environmental features.

3. Create standards to protect, conserve, enhance, restore and maintain significant natural features and the ecological connections between them. Designate open space development as a permitted use. Subject conventional subdivision to the special use permit requirements of the Zoning Law.
4. Exclude such sensitive lands as wetlands, streams, and steep slopes of 25% or more, when calculating density in a conventional subdivision or conservation development. Develop criteria and standards to govern siting of structures to avoid such areas by establishing specific building envelopes on subdivision plans. Coordinate the Planning Board's approval of open space developments with the Building Department so that building permits are issued in conformance with the approved open space plans. Protect the open space in open space developments with conservation easements held by local land trusts.



Objective: Projects that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, specific to Rhinebeck, should be identified.

Actions:

1. Establish thresholds appropriate to the town for Type 1 Actions under SEQR.
2. In conjunction with CEA designations recommended in The Rhinebeck Plan, prepare and enact a Town of Rhinebeck Type 1 Action List, circulate the list to all state and local agencies that are involved in land development activities and make the list readily available at Town Hall for all landowners, design professionals, developers and builders.

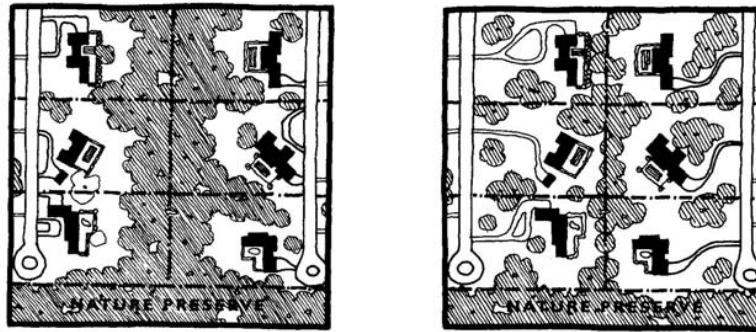
Objective: An inventory of important wildlife and plant communities should be developed, and where possible, protect and restore them through the preservation of natural areas and greenspace corridors.

Actions:

1. Integrate the information contained in the Town's "Significant Habitat" study into the site plan and subdivision review process and SEQR review process.
2. Adopt standards that require biodiversity assessment for proposed development. Immediately apply the standards during the SEQR review of development applications, thereby ensuring that adequate effort is being expended – at appropriate times of year, using appropriate techniques – to assess wildlife resources on a parcel. Have the assessment prepared by a Town Board-appointed biodiversity consultant or qualified biologist, and the applicant assume financial responsibility for it.
3. Use the baseline inventories, combined with other regional data, to develop a biodiversity plan and map, which can then be used to make biologically sound decisions during the planning process. Adopt the final maps and plan as an amendment to The Rhinebeck Plan.

Recent studies by Bard College, Rutgers University and the Institute of Ecosystems Studies have found a link between forest fragmentation and Lyme disease.

4. Work with adjacent towns and continue to work with Hudsonia Ltd., to develop strategies for protecting bio-diversity in Rhinebeck. Continue to train CAC members and volunteers in biodiversity assessment.
5. Limit development, to the greatest extent possible, to already existing fragmented areas through the use of open space development. Plan for new development to maintain ecological connections and protect critical resources so that further fragmentation does not occur.



Examples of how to limit forest fragmentation (left graphic) or allow it (right graphic) in residential subdivisions.

6. Work with local land trusts to acquire conservation easements to help preserve environmentally sensitive lands.

Vision: The Hudson River and its shore-lands should be preserved and protected, along with visual and physical access to them.

The Hudson River is the most prominent waterway in the Hudson Valley. Rhinebeck's eight miles of shoreline is a cherished natural resource that must be protected. The River serves as the main source of water supply for the village and parts of the town. Rhinebeck's origins and identity are intertwined with the well being of the Hudson River. As stewards of its natural resources, Rhinebeck residents must do all that they can to help restore the River and improve it for future generations.

Objective: The recommendations of the town's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) should be implemented, and work should be done to achieve consistency between it and the recommendations of the Hudson River Valley Greenway, the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District and other Hudson River conservation plans of local, state and federal agencies.

Actions:

1. Use SEQR, through the development approval process, to assess the consistency of an application with the LWRP and other relevant plans, including The Rhinebeck Plan².



Link the village and hamlet with an off-road trail.

² The Town's Conservation Advisory Committee has been designated as the Waterfront Advisory Committee for purposes of completing this consistency review.

2. Mandate the Planning Board to use its authority, under SEQR, to assess impacts of development projects bordering the Hudson River for their potential to provide visual and physical public access – this because Hudson River access is limited, and residents increasingly desire recreational access, trails and scenic viewing locations to the River.
3. Work with such groups as the Hudson River Greenway, Scenic Hudson, and Winnakee Land Trust to create opportunities for public access.
4. Continue to support and improve the Rhinebeck Town Landing for recreational use, the landing being the sole public access point to the River, at present.
5. Identify and acquire riverfront lands for recreation, parks and scenic overlooks, using the town's Open Space Plan, as a guide in identifying such lands.
6. Create a public access point to the River at the South Mill Road shoreline (Vanderburgh Cover area) for the benefit of canoeists and kayakers and designate Mill Road to Morton Road as part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail.

Objective: Prevent erosion and control runoff through careful application of erosion control measures and protection of steeply sloped areas, including bluffs along the Hudson River.

Actions:

1. Amend the Zoning Law to require all new development and re-development to comply with New York State's *Stormwater Design Manual* and *New York Guidelines of Urban Erosion and Sediment Control*. Enact requirements for sediment control of all development activities. Make these documents available for use by town officials and residents.
2. Guide land use decision-making in the Coastal Zone through the use of The Rhinebeck Plan and its implementing regulations and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) and the *Greenway Guidelines*.
3. Maintain the dominant forest cover of the lands sloping toward the Hudson River during subdivision and/or other approvals by restricting development up to the 100-foot contour, or for a distance of 600 feet inland from the River's edge, whichever is greater.
4. Encourage owners of land bordering the River to use ecologically sound vegetation protection practices, and discourage or regulate re-grading of lands up to the 100-foot contour, or a distance of 600 feet inland from the River's edge, whichever is greater.

Objective: CEA designations should be enacted to help protect unique or significant areas near the Hudson River for future generations.

Actions:

1. Review and address impacts on the unique or exceptional characteristics of a CEA prior to approval by The Planning Board or any other agency, and mitigate or require project changes accordingly.
2. Designate the following as CEAs and Type 1 Actions:⁶
 - ✓ Vanderburgh Cove, Suckley Cove, Astor Cove, and the hillsides above these coves which are critical to the area's ecology and significant for their natural condition.⁷ Establish public access to the coves in these areas, if feasible, given their importance to education, ecology, science and recreation.



Vanderburgh Cove waterfall

- ✓ Ferncliff Forest, Snyder Swamp, Vlei Swamp and Burger Hill Park.
- ✓ Sturgeon Point Cliffs for their scenic significance⁸

Objective: Smaller wetlands that are not currently designated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) should be regulated.

Actions:

1. Establish a Wetlands Law to regulate development activities in wetland areas that are not regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).
2. Encourage the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to upgrade stream classifications for protected water bodies in the town.
3. Establish buffers to wetlands, based upon a scientific evaluation of their importance in preserving surface and ground water quality and their numerous other benefits including, but not limited to: stormwater and flood control, biodiversity, scenic, recreational, scientific and educational values, and open space and aesthetic appreciation⁹.



Rhinebeck shopping center stormwater basin.



Stormwater basins should treat water as an asset.

4. Limit tree clearing in wetland buffers and require tree surveys in wetland buffers when new development applications are made, in order to provide a baseline for enforcing cutting provisions. Restrict the use of fertilizers or pesticides within wetland buffers. Establish "no-mow" zones in wetland buffers to limit disturbance and keep lawn clippings out of wetlands.

Objective: Strive for effective protection of vernal pools, while adopting a regulatory approach that respects private property rights and allows flexibility for property owners. Explore the use of incentives to encourage vernal pool protection.

Actions:

1. Develop local regulations for vernal pool protection, which require assessment of their biological values and the condition of critical terrestrial habitats.
2. Use best management practices which, together with assessment requirements, are modeled after the scientific literature in common use, such as the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance's *"Best Development Practices: Conserving Pool-Breeding Amphibians in Residential and Commercial Developments in the Northeastern United States."*

Objective: Surface and groundwater resources and natural drainage areas should be protected -- particularly existing and potential public water supplies. In sensitive aquifer recharge areas, activities that could pollute the groundwater should be prohibited.

Actions:

1. Amend the aquifer overlay zone (Water Resources Protection Overlay) per Figure 9-13 to ensure concerted protection and preservation of the quality and quantity of groundwater resources that the town depends on for its present and future water supplies. When amending the Zoning Law and map, implement the recommendations of Dutchess County's "Gerber Report" (recently updated) on aquifers and its aquifer protection and sustainable use goals.
2. Carefully regulate densities and land uses in aquifer and aquifer recharge areas to permit maximum recharge and to protect water quality.
3. Require open space development for residential subdivisions in the Aquifer Overlay District, in order to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces.
4. Prohibit use of infiltration basins unless surface water quality flowing into the infiltration basin is essentially pollutant-free, in order to ensure that groundwater is protected.
5. Adopt performance standards (such as enclosed buildings or structures), for the storage of: animal wastes, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides; petroleum tank storage; and salt and coal; to ensure prevention of seepage of these substances into groundwater.
6. Amend the Zoning to adopt requirements for innovatively managing stormwater with such techniques as those that increase local infiltration rates, reduce runoff from impervious surfaces, improve groundwater recharge, and reduce flooding and pollution problems for new developments, as well as for retrofits, wherever possible – as described by the Low Impact Development Center (www.lid-stormwater.net), a U. S. Environmental Protection Agency funded clearinghouse for aquatic resource protection.
7. Urge the town to continue to concertedly apply the requirements of the Water Resources Protection Overlay District; to revisit the current requirements to ensure they are consistent with the Plan's recommendations and amend them and the Zoning Map by adopting the proposed Water Resources Overlay Map found at the end of this Chapter. Work with surrounding towns to ensure that there is regional watershed-based cooperation for all development near wetlands, surface waters and other environmentally sensitive water resource areas.
8. Regulate development within and adjacent to wetlands, streams and flood-prone areas not currently regulated by NYSDEC.



A constructed wetland for septic effluent is an emerging technology that provides a low-cost, natural treatment of wastewater.



Education begins at a basic level, informing residents of the consequences of pollution.

9. Encourage the Dutchess County Health Department to require septic system inspections, including dye tests, upon sale of improved properties.
10. Conduct a public education program on the appropriate use and alternatives to pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Assign the CAC the responsibility to create the educational materials for use in the program.
11. Restrict all types of commercial use that could adversely impact or degrade water resources, including but not limited to: gasoline stations, petroleum bulk storage, dry cleaners and other ventures that use hazardous materials and wastes.

Objective: *Prevent flooding by controlling runoff rates and volumes.*

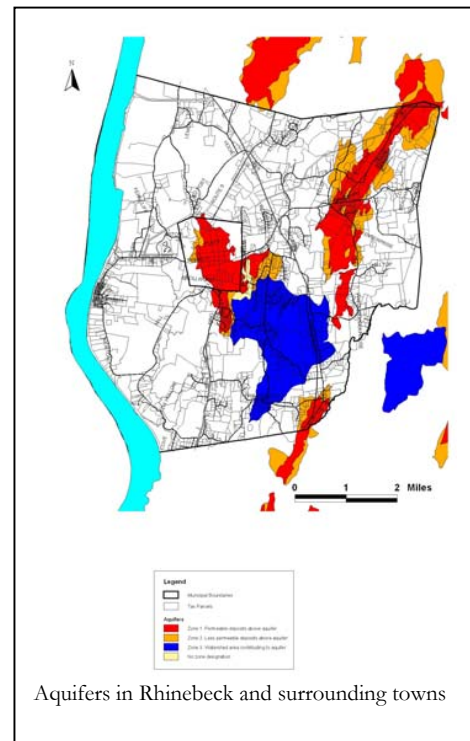
Actions:

1. Amend the Zoning Law and Subdivision regulations to require all new development and re-development to be in compliance with New York State's *Stormwater Design Manual* and the *New York Guidelines for Urban Erosion and Sediment Control*.

Objective: *New development in priority growth areas, and development in areas not designated for central water and sewer, should be compatible with the ability of aquifers and soils to support that development.*

Actions:

1. Adjust minimum lot sizes so that development that is dependent on individual wells and septic disposal systems is based on soil suitability, among other factors.
2. Enact revisions to the Town's Water Resources Protection Overlay District to require aquifer assessments designed to prevent nitrogen degradation of the groundwater.
3. Adopt the environmental mapping completed for The Rhinebeck Plan as a Natural Resource Inventory for the town (pursuant to § 239-x and y of General Municipal Law), and appoint the CAC as the clearinghouse for information.



Objective: *Regulations which protect residents from the potential dangers that result from soil or water contamination should be adopted.*

Actions:

1. Develop regulations that restrict or ban the use of fertilizers, pesticides and/or herbicides in areas adjacent to sensitive aquatic environments or over aquifers. Exempt farmers who use "Best Management Practices" from such regulations. Explore ways to provide additional information to homeowners about use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.
2. Develop an Integrated Pest Management¹⁰ (IPM) program for all town properties, including parks, and encourage the Village, School District and private property owners to follow suit.
3. Encourage the Town Highway Department to adhere to the above-mentioned regulations.

Objective: Strive to protect the quality and quantity of Hudson River water.

Actions:

1. Monitor the potential for changes in the quantity or quality of Hudson River water.
2. Participate in all decisions that affect either the quantity or quality of water in the Hudson River by requesting Interested Agency status during the review of any SEQR action that could affect the River's water, or by requesting Intervener's status on permit application reviews.

Objective: Develop and enact inter-municipal agreements with all surrounding towns and work with other organizations and entities to plan for conservation of natural resources that transcend municipal boundaries.

Actions:

1. Enter into agreements with Red Hook, Tivoli, Milan, Clinton, and Hyde Park to create compatible, local regulations to protect such important resources as wetlands and floodplains, aquifers, watersheds, historic resources and scenic viewsheds, using the powers granted to the town under Town Law to do so.
2. Enter into agreements with the town of Ulster and the city of Kingston in Ulster County to create compatible, local regulations for protection of scenic and aesthetic resources, as well as the Hudson River watershed, using the powers granted under the Town and General City Laws to do so.
3. Consider establishment of inter-municipal overlay districts to protect, enhance and develop community resources.
4. Work closely with other local, county, state and federal agencies to ensure that The Rhinebeck Plan is carefully considered for large-scale projects that will impact the town, including its nationally recognized place in the nation's history, for its historic architectural treasures and unique sense of place, for its irreplaceable quality of life and sensitive environmental resources such as air and water quality and scenic beauty.
5. Actively participate in the Northern Dutchess Alliance to facilitate regional planning.

¹ Also refer to Chapter 5 for a discussion of environmental resource protection measures pertaining to new development.

² Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, CEAs are specific geographic areas designated by state or local agencies that have exceptional or unique environmental characteristics. Once designated, all agencies must address whether proposed actions could affect the exceptional or unique characteristics of the CEAs. Refer to Chapter 10 for lists of scenic roads and viewsheds CEAs.

³ Ferncliff Forest is currently in the town's LC Zoning District.

⁴ SEQR requires all State and local agencies in New York to analyze the environmental impacts of their actions and to devise appropriate mitigation measures or find alternatives to those actions found to have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

⁵ Under New York State Law, Rhinebeck's zoning regulations that apply to new subdivisions can be modified so that the natural and scenic qualities of open lands are preserved.

⁶ Also refer to Chapter 10 for lists of scenic roads and viewsheds CEAs. It should be noted that all actions that occur within the National Landmark District are automatically Type 1 Actions due to their historic significance.

⁷ The coves contain significant wetland vegetation and are important fish spawning and migratory bird shelter areas.

⁸ Formed of shale, the cliffs rise 100' above the river and extend nearly 1 1/2 miles from Suckley Cove to Rhinecliff.

⁹ Places where buffer requirements are particularly important include wetlands, streams, or water bodies identified as biodiversity areas; areas adjacent to trout spawning waters; and areas adjacent to lakefronts, ponds, or vernal pools.

¹⁰ IPM is a systematic approach to managing pests that focuses on long-term prevention or suppression with minimal impact on human health, the environment and non-target organisms.

Scenic Resources

Much of Rhinebeck's unique character is recognized in an historic shorelands scenic district. The Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District, designated as scenic under Article 49 of New York State Environmental Conservation Law, covers the east bank of the Hudson River, from Hyde Park to Germantown. The section within Rhinebeck extends eastward from the centerline of the Hudson to a line 500 feet east of Lemon Lane, Hook Road, Old Post Road and Route 9. It offers panoramic views of the River, with impressive landscapes enhanced by the Catskill Mountains to the west.

Portions of this area were also listed as historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 as further discussed in Chapter 11, "Historic and Cultural Resources." The Twenty-Mile Historic District is within the Scenic District, and is composed of the surviving estates built in the area throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The magnificent homes of this district span more than two centuries. They represent the architectural and social history of the times, and served as residences of several successful and powerful New York families. Included in this group of estates is Ferncliff, home of the Astor family.

The estates assumed additional importance through the role that many of their occupants played in state and national history. However, the special significance of the area is derived from its location along the Hudson River, with views of the Catskill Mountain range adding a dimension that rivals and enhances its historic and architectural significance.

In 1983, the Hudson River Shorelands Task Force completed a management plan for the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District under contract with New York State. The plan contains a detailed inventory of scenic resources, land use, and tourism and recreation sites within the district, and proposals for recognizing and protecting the integrity of the district's uniqueness. It presents specific recommendations for managing viewsheds, natural complexes, architecture, estate grounds, townscapes, the pastoral countryside, stonewalls, railroad rights-of-way and campuses. These recommendations, and the planning, zoning, and project review mechanisms that can be used to implement them, have been reviewed as part of the research work for The Rhinebeck Plan and should be considered part of the background documentation for the Plan. These recommendations are discussed below, under the heading, "Regional Plans."

SCENIC RESOURCES*Scenic Districts*

The Town of Rhinebeck is included in two scenic districts designated by the state. In 1981, the New York State Legislature established the Coastal Management Program, which provided for the designation and protection of scenic areas of statewide significance (SASS). The Hudson River was the first area to be reviewed for SASS designation, and the result is six areas with the stretch of the river from the Troy Dam to New York City, as depicted in Figure 10.1 below. Rhinebeck is included in the Estates District segment of the Hudson River SASS. For more information about the SASS designation for Rhinebeck, please see the New York State Department of State's *Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance* publication (July 22, 1993 by the Division of Coastal Resources and Waterfront Revitalization), which is on file at Rhinebeck Town Hall or available through the Department of State. Figure 10.1 below shows the Estates District in the Town of Rhinebeck.

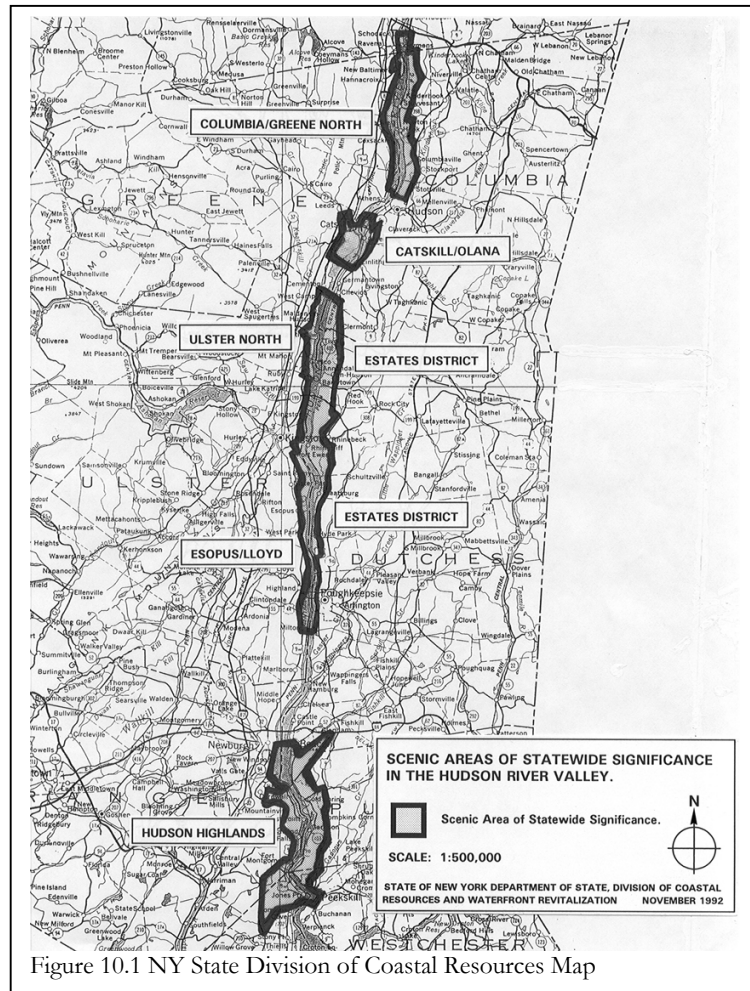


Figure 10.1 NY State Division of Coastal Resources Map

The Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District was designated by the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 1981, under Article 49 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law. The District stretches from Germantown in Columbia County to Hyde Park in Dutchess County. A *Management Plan* was published in 1983 by the Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley, Inc. working cooperatively with the DEC, the Department of Transportation, the two county planning agencies, a Scenic Road Advisory Committee, the Hudson River Shorelands Task Force and several consultants. For more information on the *Management Plan*, see the description provided below under Regional Plans.

Scenic Roads

There are both national and state scenic byway programs that designate distinctive roadways possessing specific characteristics, such as scenic quality, unusual natural areas, historic and

culture resources and special recreational opportunities. Rhinebeck contains such designated scenic byways. Appendix 8 provides a comprehensive inventory of scenic roads in Rhinebeck.

A survey completed by the American Recreation Coalition in 1995 showed that driving for pleasure is the second most popular recreational activity after walking.¹ Scenic roads help to maintain the scenic beauty and quality of life of the town, but are also an integral part of Rhinebeck's popularity as a tourism destination.

Roadways that have been designated as scenic roads (as shown on Figure 10.2 at the end of this Chapter) by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation New York (now under the auspices of the New York State Department of Transportation's Scenic By-Ways Program), include:

- NYS Route 199 from the Dutchess/Ulster County line on the Kingston/Rhinecliff Bridge to the intersection with NYS Route 9G.
- River Road from the intersection with Rhinecliff Road to the Red Hook/Rhinebeck town line.
- NYS Route 9 from the Hyde Park/Rhinebeck town line to the intersection with South Mill Road.
- South Mill Road from the intersection with NYS Route 9 to the intersection with Morton Road.
- Morton Road from the intersection with South Mill Road to the intersection with Kelley Street.
- Mill Road from the intersection with Morton Road to the intersection with NYS Route 9.

Roadways that have been locally designated as having scenic significance include:

- Kelly Street from the intersection with Morton Road to the intersection with Rhinecliff Road.
- Charles Street from the intersection with Kelly Street to the intersection with Rhinecliff Road.
- Rhinecliff Road from the intersection with Charles Street to the intersection with NYS Route 9.
- NYS Route 9 from the intersection with South Mill Road to the intersection with Montgomery Street in the Village of Rhinebeck.
- Astor Drive from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Montgomery Street in the Village of Rhinebeck.
- Montgomery Street from the intersection with NYS Route 9 to the intersection with Old Post Road on the town/village line.
- Mt. Rutsen Road from the intersection with Old Post Road (just north of the village of Rhinebeck) to the intersection with River Road.
- Old Post Road from the intersection with Montgomery Street to the intersection with NYS Route 9G.

¹ Reported in *Saving America's Countryside – A Guide to Rural Conservation*, Second Edition (1997).

- NYS Route 9G from the intersection with Old Post Road in the Town of Rhinebeck to the Rhinebeck/Red Hook town line.

Vision: The rural, scenic, natural and historic character of the town should be protected.

Rhinebeck is renowned for its scenic beauty and bucolic open spaces, rural and historic character and outstanding quality of life. The town is also known for the care it takes to ensure that its nationally recognized resources are protected and preserved. We cannot preserve all remaining unprotected lands as open space, nor preserve, all at once, those lands which we can; however, in accordance with the mandate of an overwhelming majority of Rhinebeck residents, we must find ways to protect as many remaining open space lands as are necessary to maintain Rhinebeck's rural character, quality of life, scenic resources and natural environment.

Objective: Critical Environmental Area designations should be enacted to help protect cultural resources, including rural and scenic roads, landscapes, hamlets and such other original settlements as Rhinecliff, Hillside, Rock City and Wurtemberg.¹

Actions:

1. Designate all Class A Scenic Roads in Rhinebeck (listed in the Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands District Plan) as CEAs, for their scenic road significance. Evaluate development regulations within and adjoining the scenic road corridors. Designate the following scenic roads as CEAs:
 - ✓ Route 9 from the intersection with South Mill Road to the intersection with Old Post Road in the village of Rhinebeck
 - ✓ Grinnell Street, Dutchess Terrace and Loftus Street in Rhinecliff
 - ✓ Morton Road from the intersection with South Mill Road, leading to the intersection with Rhinecliff Road (State Route 308)
 - ✓ Rhinecliff Road from the intersection with Morton Road to the intersection with both Ryan Road and River Road
 - ✓ River Road from the intersection with Morton Road to the town's boundary with Red Hook (Work with Red Hook to encourage a continuous CEA along River Road and Annandale Road.)
 - ✓ Astor Drive from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Old Post Road in the village of Rhinebeck
 - ✓ Mt. Rutsen Road from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Old Post Road just north of the village of Rhinebeck
 - ✓ Hook Road (Upper and Lower) from the intersection with River Road to the intersection with Old Post Road
 - ✓ NY Route 9G from the intersection with Old Post Road in Rhinebeck to the Red Hook town line.
 - ✓ NY Route 199 from the intersection with Route 9G to the Ulster County Line *via* the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge



River Road

2. Designate the following scenic viewsheds and historic landscapes as CEAs:

- ✓ Hamlet of Rhinecliff including the viewscapes from Grinnell and Loftus streets and Dutchess Terrace
- ✓ Southlands Farm
- ✓ Burger Hill Park
- ✓ Linwood Spiritual Center
- ✓ The Route 9 gateway to the village, north of Ackert Hook Road
- ✓ Former lands of Olin Dows
- ✓ The “flats” north of the village along Route 9, including the Dutchess County Fairgrounds and undeveloped lands to both the east and the west
- ✓ Lands along the Hudson River on the west side of River Road, as well as open lands on the east side of the Road
- ✓ Former lands of Levi P. Morton
- ✓ Open fields along Route 9G in the Wurtemberg area
- ✓ Open lands along State Route 308 between Rhinebeck village and Rock City
- ✓ The open fields and views northwest to the Catskills from the area of the Quitman House on Route 9
- ✓ Lands along the 20-mile “Historic District Hike & Bike Route”
- ✓ Gateway to town *via* Bulls Head/Slate Quarry Road from the Taconic Parkway
- ✓ Open lands on both sides of Rhinecliff Road/State Route 308
- ✓ All existing farms including, but not limited to, Scholldorf, Buttonwood, McLaughlin, Lown and Sepasco
- ✓ Areas recommended for CEA designation in the 1989 Open Space Plan
- ✓ All parcels over 200 acres; consider all parcels over 50 acres
- ✓ The Landsman Kill corridor
- ✓ Open lands along Mill Road, including lands of Kibel/DeCola and L. McLaughlin
- ✓ Mill Road Pond and the waterfall
- ✓ Buttermilk Falls
- ✓ Miller Road triangle (triangle formed by State Routes 308, Route 9G and Miller Road)
- ✓ Creed parcels in Rhinebeck and Rhinecliff



Miller Road

3. Designate the following historic town roads in Rhinebeck as CEAs under SEQR for their rural and/or scenic significance:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Ackert Hook | ✓ Old Post |
| ✓ Bollenbecker | ✓ Oriole Mills |
| ✓ Burger | ✓ Patton |
| ✓ Cedar Heights | ✓ Pells |
| ✓ Crosby Lane | ✓ Pilgrims Progress |
| ✓ Fox Hollow | ✓ Primrose Hill |
| ✓ Frost | ✓ Ryan |
| ✓ Haggerty Hill | ✓ Schultz Hill |
| ✓ Hilltop | ✓ Stone Church |
| ✓ Middle | ✓ Violet Hill |
| ✓ Mill | ✓ Vlei |
| ✓ Miller | ✓ Wey |



Pells Road

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Old Primrose Hill | ✓ White Schoolhouse |
| ✓ Old Rock City | ✓ Wurtemberg |

Objective: The development approval process should be amended to require consideration of scenic elements for all development in specified viewsheds during the development approval process.

Actions:

1. Preserve the visual integrity of Rhinebeck's Scenic District, as designated by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), as well as other scenic viewsheds throughout the town.
2. Preserve scenic district qualities by becoming an "Interested Party" in the SEQR review process for proposed projects outside of Rhinebeck town boundaries.
3. Prepare Scenic Resource Protection Regulations in the Zoning Law ensuring scenic integrity in new development and re-development during the review and approval process.
4. Require conservation subdivision and the use of conservation easements to protect viewsheds.

¹ Also refer to page 9.17 for a list of CEAs relating to the Hudson River.

Agriculture and Open Space

There is an increasing awareness regarding the viability and sustainability of agriculture in the Hudson Valley. Today's farmers face many issues, including: escalating land values and taxes; rising fuel costs; increasing numbers of non-farm neighbors who may not appreciate the industrial characteristics of farming (such as noise, dust and hours of operation); relatively stable food pricing; and, of course, the weather. The good news is that many farmers in this region have adapted their business practices to maximize earning potential by participating in local and regional farm markets, establishing pick your own operations and creating value-added products to fill *niche* markets.

Farms are defining traits in a rural landscape, but certain types of agricultural operations require the most productive soils also known as Prime Farmland Soils. However, these Prime Farmland Soils are often the easiest to develop (including septic disposal system installation), because they are found on typically flat, well-drained areas, defined by rapid permeability. This also makes them subject to groundwater contamination. According to the Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District, Prime Farmland Soils in Southern Dutchess County which have been developed with residential uses served by septic disposal systems, have been subject to nitrate contamination, due to the inability of the soils to properly filter and renovate septic effluent.

Agricultural soils fall into two categories as described below and depicted in Figure 11.1:

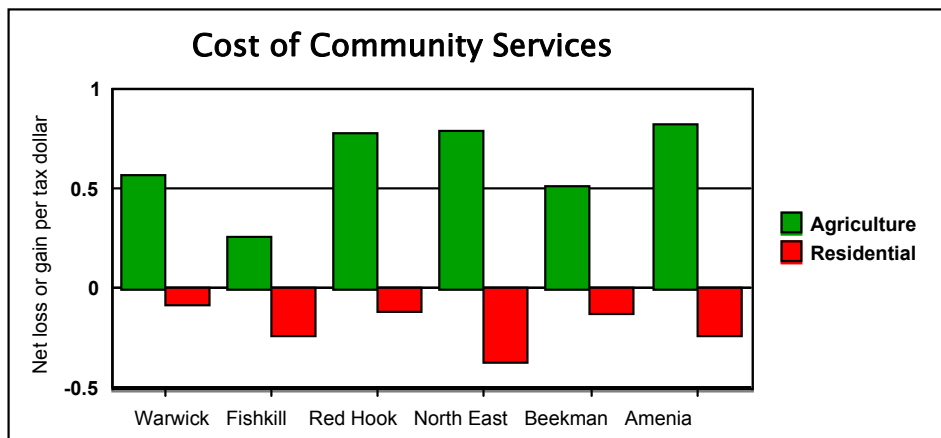
Prime: the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines these as soils that best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. Prime soils produce the highest yield with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources, and farming these soils results in the least damage to the environment. These are USDA soil classes 1-3.

Statewide Important: These soils are important to agricultural in New York, but contain some properties that do not meet prime farmland criteria such as seasonal wetness, erodibility, limited rooting zone, etc. They can be farmed satisfactorily by greater inputs of fertilizer, soil amendments, drainage improvements and erosion control or flood protection. These soils produce fair-to-good crop yields when managed properly. These are USDA soil classes 4-6.

Agricultural soils in classes one (1) through four (4) are specifically identified on the SEQR Part 1 Environmental Assessment Form (EAF) for impact assessment purposes. In addition, the

Part 2 EAF also requires that construction activities include an assessment of environmental impacts on agricultural soils and agricultural lands, due to their importance to farming and potential future farming.

The role of agriculture has changed, but new and innovative strategies are emerging. The town is home to many acres of Prime Agricultural Soils and Soils of State-wide Significance. Once the soil profile is disturbed by construction or development, they can never be used again for agriculture. This is because the important characteristics of these agricultural soils are eliminated and future economic production not longer exists. A viable agricultural economy contributes to stable property taxes and local employment, supports the livelihood of local families, provides essential locally grown agricultural products (sometimes referred to as food security), and helps to preserve scenic roads, working landscapes and historic sites. As a ratable, farming is a preferred land use in terms of the cost of community services. Consistently, Cost of Community Services' studies, conducted throughout the Hudson Valley, demonstrate that operating farms demand less in services for every dollar of taxes that they pay, as shown in the chart below. In contrast, residential property requires more in community services for every



dollar in taxes paid. Thus, from a fiscal standpoint alone, farming is a vital component to the health of Rhinebeck's economy.

Farming in many areas no longer takes on the traditional farmstead consisting of dairy cattle, meat production or food crops. Successful farmers have switched to *niche* markets to serve farmers markets, vineyards and winery production, and the vast demand for specialty food items in the New York metropolitan area. There are other alternatives available to existing farmers or to those who wish to enter a life of farming. According to a March 2005 report¹ on the benefits of renewable energy for New York State by the New York State Comptrollers Office:

*By 2013, renewable energy production [including solar, wind and **biomass from farms**] in New York would create 15,880 new jobs. This figure represents only the direct jobs that could be created and does not reflect indirect job growth. The Office of the State Comptroller estimates that total job growth, including direct jobs, indirect jobs created in related industries, and job creation induced from expanded household spending, would be nearly three times greater—about 43,000 new jobs... Cultivation of energy crops offers an alternative to traditional farm crops. Energy crops are easier to grow, require far less work, improve the quality of the soil, and can be grown on land unable to support food crops. In addition, these crops, which include fast-growing switchgrass and poplar and willow trees, do not require tilling, and thereby protect the soil from damage and erosion. (An average-sized corn farm that is replanted with energy crops could save 66 truckloads of soil from erosion each*

¹ *Energizing the Future*, Report 12-2005, www.osc.state.ny.us, (March 2005).

year.) These crops also have a deep root system, which enhances the structure of the soil (thereby preventing erosion), increasing the soil's organic content, and helping to filter chemical runoff from other farms before it can be deposited in waterways. Moreover, energy crops require far less fertilizer, pesticide, herbicide, and fungicide than traditional crops...New York is the third-largest dairy producer in the country, which makes the State well suited to take advantage of growth in the biomass industry. The combined animal and agricultural waste produced by both large dairy farms and small family farms are considerable. Even without including the use of animal waste, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that New York's biomass resources are sufficient to supply 31 percent of residential electricity use. In addition, harvesting animal waste would not only provide a sustainable source of energy, but would also eliminate the expense and environmental impact of disposal. Furthermore, it would provide farmers and ranchers with yet another source of income.

A small village of 765 residents in Germany (Jühnde), uses the energy created from a biogas plant that is fueled by crops grown on just 370 acres of land. The total energy produced is 3.5 million kilowatts of power, which is far more than the residents consume annually. The excess electricity goes into the electric grid with the annual savings paid (\$280,000) to the farmers. In New York State, utilities are required to “buy-back” electricity created by wind, solar or biomass.

A farmer in Gap, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia, raises vegetables that supply about 20 restaurants around the city. He uses waste cooking oil (biodiesel), to power his truck to make the deliveries, to heat his home and to heat his greenhouse, which allows him to grow warm weather crops throughout the winter. Rudolph Diesel originally designed his engine to empower farmers more than 100 years ago, when cooking oil was more plentiful than diesel fuel made from petroleum.

Open space protection in the town should not come at a cost of excessive maintenance. If the land can be used wisely and effectively by farmers and others willing to work it in line with its full potential, rather than covering it with homes, lawns, and roads, then Rhinebeck should do all it can to ensure that sufficient areas of virgin soil (i.e. undisturbed by excavation or soil compaction) remain for active production, to preserve the rural character of the town, to provide employment, food security and environmental quality – including open space protection.

Vision: The rural, scenic, natural and historic character of the town should be protected.

Rhinebeck is renowned for its scenic beauty and bucolic open spaces, rural and historic character and outstanding quality of life. The town is also known for the care it takes to ensure that its nationally recognized resources are protected and preserved. We cannot preserve all remaining unprotected lands as open space, nor preserve, all at once, those lands which we can; however, in accordance with the mandate of an overwhelming majority of Rhinebeck residents, we must find ways to protect as many remaining open space lands as are necessary to maintain Rhinebeck's rural character, quality of life, scenic resources and natural environment.

Objective: *Continue good working relationships with local land trusts and preservation organizations to assist in preserving the natural, historical and cultural elements of the community, and cooperate with them on limited development techniques.*

Actions:

1. Work with local land trusts, with Hudson River Heritage, Rhinebeck Historical Society and other organizations to secure conservation easements on historic structures, historic facades, historic sites and landscapes, as well as open space, agricultural lands, trails, and other important environmental resources in the community.
2. Prepare and distribute to all landowners in the town, a brochure that explains the benefits of donating conservation easements – i.e., the federal and state income tax benefits on voluntary restrictions. Grant reduced assessments on encumbered property, in recognition of the elimination of the need for municipal and school services, for properties that will be preserved *in perpetuity*.
3. Work with developers or landowners who wish to sell their land for partial development, with preservation restrictions placed on the remaining open space. Design the development so that the limited number of home sites will not conflict with the resource (e.g. farmland, woodland, trails or other open space) that is being protected. Protect the land with a conservation easement held by a land trust.



Open space development on farms

Vision: *Lands suitable and necessary for farming, agriculture and forestry should be conserved.*

Without farms and forests we lose the rural and open space character of the town and much more: aquifer protection, clean air, pastoral landscapes, local food sources and local energy supplies, employment, and economic stability to name a few. With fuel prices increasing with no end in sight, it makes good sense to ensure we have as many local sources of food supply as possible. Good productive soil should continue to be used for production of food and fiber, not McMansions.

Objective: *Prime and important agricultural soils should be conserved.*

Actions:

1. Create an Agriculture Conservation Overlay Zoning District that regulates the development of prime farmland soils.
2. Operating farms that have prime agricultural soils should have a



Scholldorf Dairy Farm

- higher priority for the proposed Purchase of Development Rights program.
3. Create an Agriculture Advancement District and regulations that would allow the Town the right-of-first refusal for outright purchase or purchase of development rights from agricultural properties and to facilitate assistance to the property owner to seek alternatives to selling land for development.

Objective: *Preserve as many operating farms as possible.*

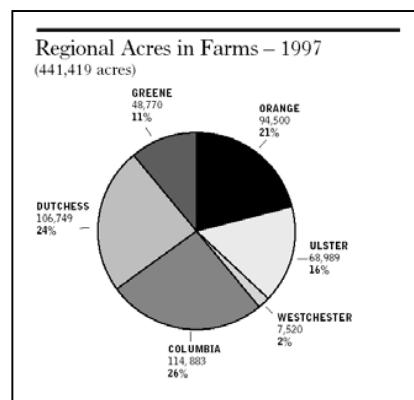
Actions:

1. Prepare and adopt an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.
2. Encourage owners of historic barns to take advantage of New York State's investment tax credits for their rehabilitation, which allows a credit of 25 percent of a taxpayer's qualifying rehabilitation expenditures for any barn that is considered a qualified rehabilitated building. Encourage farmers and historic barn owners to take advantage of the New York State Barn Restoration and Preservation Program to help pay for the renovation of barns and other aging farm buildings which are at least 50 years-old, in order to preserve them as monuments to the state's agricultural heritage. The \$2.0 million program will pay for as much as 80 percent of the cost of repairs, up to \$25,000 per project. Structures being improved for active agricultural use, that are visible from scenic roads; that are fixtures in the rural landscape, or that are on or eligible for the state and national Historic Registers will be given priority.

Objective: *Agricultural operations should be protected from disruptions or constraints associated with adjacent, non-agricultural development.*

Actions:

1. Adopt a local "right-to-farm" law designed to protect a farmer against regulations and private nuisance suits that would prevent the farmer from conducting normally accepted agricultural practices.¹
2. Amend the Zoning Law to require the placement of "Ag Notes" or "Forestry Notes" on subdivision plats, and as deeded declarations in the deeds of new residential lots approved within 2000 feet of a farm within an Agricultural District, or a forest being managed in accordance with § 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law, in all zoning districts where farming and forestry are permitted uses. The notes provide purchasers of land or dwellings in these areas with an affirmative notification of the benefits and potential nuisances associated with these important open space uses.
3. Require the use of buffer strips on all lands subject to development or re-development when they are adjacent to existing farming or forestry operations.



Objective: Non-agricultural activities in areas designated for agricultural and forestry uses should be clustered on marginal soils.

Actions:

1. Mandate the use of conservation subdivision for lands that contain important prime farmland and statewide significant soils. Likewise, reserve areas of mature forests for appreciation of nature and if feasible, for sustainable forestry

Objective: Incentives for landowners to maintain land in agricultural and forestry uses should be developed, keeping these land uses affordable so that new farmers can begin farming and more landowners can manage their forested areas in a sustainable fashion.



Sepasco Farm on Route 308

Actions:

1. Prepare agriculture and forestry-friendly Zoning Law revisions that allow landowners to engage in commercial activities that provide flexibility in the use of their existing buildings and lands, generating additional income.
2. Allow adaptive re-use of non-residential farm buildings in order to preserve them, subject to performance standards.
3. Allow passive and non-motorized outdoor recreational use of farms and forests for a fee (e.g., fishing, cross-country skiing, hunting, and limited special events) by special use permit.
4. Disallow large-scale events attracting mass gatherings on farms and in forests, limiting them solely to the Dutchess County Fairgrounds.
5. Permit such low- impact activities as small-scale sawmills, furniture making and other local wood-based industries, crafts and food processing on farms, subject to performance standards through the special use permit process (the purpose of which is to ensure impacts like traffic, noise, odors and outdoor storage create no adverse effects on the neighborhood).
6. Promote local farming operations by establishing such promotional/recreational activities as a bicycle tour highlighting farming operations, farm tours and harvest festivals, for example; also support the establishment of bed and breakfast operations on farms.
7. Encourage the use of existing silos as cell towers, and allow the construction of cell towers disguised as new silos and equipment shelters as farm structures on existing farms.
8. Require the use of cell towers camouflaged as trees in forested areas or other designs compatible with the surrounding environment.

Objective: Support the economic viability of farming and forestry, encouraging the continuation and diversification of agricultural and forestry activities.

Actions:

1. Enact local “Right-to-Farm,” Right-to-Market” and “Right to Practice Forestry” legislation identifying the importance of agriculture and forestry to the town’s economy and quality of life, its visual appeal and the social well being it generates. Clarify, in the legislation, that Rhinebeck encourages economically viable open space uses and urges understanding and cooperation with the necessary day-to-day operations involved with the farming and forestry industries.
2. Continue to support the Farmer’s Market within the village.
3. Explore the feasibility of an indoor farmers market at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds or other existing structures (like barns) in the town during inclement weather. The indoor market could serve nursery-based or cold storage-based agricultural activities, flower production, and food processing for entrepreneurs in the town and elsewhere in the Hudson Valley during the months when soils-based agricultural activities are not possible.
4. Encourage “agri-tourism.” Support continued production of a map listing farm stands, farm products and farms to visit.
5. Permit recreational uses of farmland and forested lands to strengthen the economic viability of these open spaces and ensure that soils supporting these activities are protected for future generations. Permit passive and non-motorized outdoor recreational uses on these lands which are clearly related to agriculture or the enjoyment of forests, nature and open space, and that coexist with agriculture or forestry.
6. Encourage pick-your-own” operations, road stands and farm markets, wineries, greenhouses, food processing facilities, inns, bed and breakfasts, and other low -impact endeavors to improve prospects for economic viability and to put accessory buildings to good use. Protect adjacent landowners and the town by permitting such accessory businesses only on the basis of the use of specially prepared performance standards.
7. Allow the on-site retail sale of farm and wood products produced on the site and amend the Zoning Law to expand the provisions allowing these uses.
8. Educate residents on the benefits of wood heating² as an alternative to the use of fossil fuels, providing that new wood stoves (that meet state and federal governments’ stringent air quality requirements) are used. Make the Zoning Law “forestry-friendly,” stressing that properly managed, sustainable forests to which no permanent damage occurs create a greater diversity of wildlife habitats.
9. Encourage cultivation of energy crops, which offers an alternative to traditional farm crops. Energy crops are easier to grow, require far less work, improve the quality of the soil, and can be grown on land unable to support food crops. In addition, these crops, which include fast-growing switchgrass and poplar and willow trees, do not require tilling, and thereby protect the soil from damage and erosion.
10. Encourage the School District and such local institutions as the Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Northern Dutchess Hospital, The Baptist Home, Daytop, Ferncliff Nursing Home and Astor Home, to purchase vegetables, fruits and other locally grown or produced farm products, and encourage the purchase of locally produced wood products.

*Every year, we burn
100,000 years of
ancient plant growth.
We’re fueling our
civilization with
ancient sunlight.*

Objective: Consider assessing the developed portion of cluster developments as the principal use, and the protected open space as lands set aside to encourage agricultural or forestry uses to be continued on the site.

Actions:

1. Work with the tax assessor to determine the feasibility of revising the town's assessment methods for priority farmland, forestland and other open space parcels.
2. Consider use of Agricultural Advancement District re-zoning, wherein the farm owner and the town enter into an agreement that provides the town with a right of first refusal to purchase a given property outright, or to purchase the owner's development rights³.

Objective: Work to ensure that the town's recent re-evaluation of property assessments will not adversely affect conservation, agricultural or forestry uses.

Actions:

1. Explore the feasibility of a "value and use" assessment for farmland, forestland and easements, rather than the current "highest and best use" assessment. While this concern is outside the authority of the town, urge the Town Board to explore this issue further with the County Legislature.

Objective: Rhinebeck's agricultural heritage should be preserved.

Actions:

1. Use SEQR to help protect the town's agricultural heritage.
2. Inventory all historic barns in the town, directing the Town historian to coordinate the activity, and provide educational materials and help to assist owners in preserving and protecting their barns.
3. Consider the effect of the loss of farm structures on the town's rural, historic and agricultural character during the application process for new development of properties that comprise such structures
4. Identify sources of funds for rehabilitating and adaptively reusing farm structures to aid in their preservation.
5. Encourage the School District to incorporate "Ag in the Classroom" in the elementary school, and to develop an agricultural and forestry education program for the higher grades. Such programs could serve to encourage young people to choose farming or forestry as an occupation, provide trained workers for local agricultural, forestry, and related vocations, and help to maintain the viability of open space.
6. Appoint an Open Space Committee to advise the Town Board on agricultural and forestry issues. The Committee would also serve as an active liaison between the town government and the farming and forestry communities, and would advise local landowners on available tax opportunities and on land use options for protecting farmland and forested lands. Charge the Committee with preparation of an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and with providing educational programs on the values of farming and forestry to the schools and community.
7. Promote the use of best management practices for farms and forest management areas in the town.



Small-scale farming in Rhinebeck

8. Encourage farmers to establish Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations in the town. Publicize the tools that the US Department of Agriculture provides for farmers interested in starting up a CSA through its website at:
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/csafarmer.htm>.
9. Identify farmers who may be willing to establish a community garden for residents who may want to establish a vegetable garden, but lack the land to do so. Review public lands in the town (such as the Thompson-Mazzarella Park), which may qualify for establishment of a community garden (as defined in Article 2-c of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law). Investigate other community gardens, such as the one in New Paltz created on village-owned lands, and use these as a model.

Vision: Open space and viewsheds, agricultural and forested lands, and gateways, should be preserved and protected as Rhinebeck's housing stock is moderately expanded.

Residents of the town would benefit socially, environmentally, and economically from the conservation of open space. The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors stated, "Across the country, when people were asked where they would prefer to live, work, shop, and recreate, they invariably select communities or neighborhoods that have an abundance of trees, open spaces, and uncluttered pedestrian ways. These preferences translate into clear economic terms: if a community is to succeed in attracting new residents and businesses, it must be concerned about its appearance, physical character, livability, and 'feel'".

Objective: Create an Open Space and Affordable Housing Committee to prepare an integrated plan for achieving the Town's open space and affordable housing goals.

Actions:

1. Adopt an Open Space and Affordable Housing plan as an addendum to The Rhinebeck Plan², subject to Town Board review and approval.
2. Continue to work with local land trusts to acquire conservation easements on open space lands.
3. Preserve the traditions and values of The Dutchess County Agricultural Society, which advertises that the Fair is a celebration of Dutchess County's farming traditions and values, by encouraging the Society to set aside a portion of the Fair proceeds to benefit farmers and preservation of farmland in Rhinebeck (the most directly impacted community with traffic, noise, etc.). This could be in the form of a surcharge on Fair attendees to be used as a source of revenue for the Open Space Fund. Explore this potential funding source with the Society and with the village, in accordance with New York State Law; seek amendments to NY State Law, if appropriate, to achieve this goal.

Objective: Amend the Zoning Law to require a specific percentage of land as open space in all developments.

Actions:

1. Increase the current open space minimums that exist under the Residential Cluster Development Regulations dependent on density. This will provide for a minimum lot size for safe septic systems, wells and privacy while creating maximum lot sizes that won't intrude on rural lands. Change the terminology in the Zoning Law so that cluster developments are referred to as conservation subdivisions or conservation developments.
2. Require the use of building envelopes on conservation subdivisions as part of the four-step design process (described in Chapter 8), so that any change in placement of the building

² See Appendix 5.

envelope at the time of application for a building permit will require additional review by the Planning Board. Set conditions on the maximum limits of disturbance on each lot.

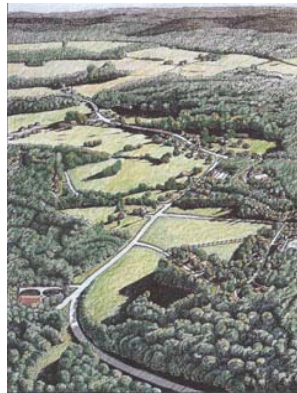
Objective: Promote conservation development to preserve open space.

Actions:

1. Designate conservation subdivisions as a permitted use, and conventional subdivision as a special use permit in the Zoning Law. Establish, as a condition for the special use permit, that conventional subdivision development will do no more harm to the environment of the site and community than would a conservation subdivision.
2. Work with local land trusts to secure conservation easements on all conserved lands in conservation developments.
3. Amend the cluster regulations in the Zoning Law to reflect the recommendations of *Greenway Guide A1* on conservation subdivision design.
4. Amend the current methods for density yield calculations in the town's Zoning Law to exclude environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, wetland buffers, steep slopes over 25 percent, and streams (areas not considered suitable for building development) in determining the number of lots to be subdivided in areas except in Zoning Districts with very large minimum lot sizes where it is possible to avoid these sensitive resources through other means. Apply the “net buildable area” calculation in determination of lot count in conservation or conventional development. This technique allows for a maximum density of development in the town and limits the overall “build-out” of house lots, thereby retaining rural character and environmental quality.



Conventional Subdivision



Conservation Subdivision

5. Encourage developers to provide common (shared) septic disposal systems in conservation developments and, if possible, allow the common conservation to be used for such septic systems. Encourage state-of-the-art sewage disposal systems such as reed beds and work closely with the Dutchess County Planning and Health Departments to encourage use of such innovative systems.
6. Amend the Zoning Law to make it clear there should be flexibility in lot sizes and the design of conservation subdivisions including both house lots and open space areas provided the open space is encumbered with conservation easements. The open space created in conservation subdivisions would not need to be owned communally, as they would be required to do under the present Zoning Law. This could include fee simple dedication to the town or to a private land trust, ownership by a homeowners association, or private non-common ownership within one or more large “conservancy lots” provided

- the open space is permanently restricted from future development, an option that may be preferable for open space land that is intended for agricultural or horticultural use.
7. Allow for flexibility for all lots in conservation subdivisions so that minimum acreage is determined not only by well and septic system requirements but also with regard to protection of environmental resources and the preservation of the natural and scenic qualities of open lands.
 8. Allow flexibility for flag lots and road frontage in conservation subdivisions to achieve the most appropriate use of open space and rural aesthetics on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The “four-step design process” described in Chapter 5 of the Plan should shape future subdivision design and development, not the numeric and other standards of the Zoning Law.
 9. Allow flexibility in the ownership of open space areas (including private ownership shared by landowners in the subdivision), and other methods that would make it as uncomplicated as possible to advance conservation subdivision design and preserve open space.
 10. Encourage the use of solar heat and electricity in development plans.
 11. Plan for public hiking, biking, walking and cross-country skiing trails on common open space lands, which connect with other trail and open space projects. Support horseback riding trails, and discourage motorized vehicles on town-wide trail networks, and wherever feasible, make them accessible to the public.
 12. Adopt Design Guidelines that incorporate patterns illustrating conservation subdivision design.
 13. Amend the Subdivision Regulations to encourage all applicants for new subdivision development to view the Center for Rural Massachusetts’ 60-minute video, *Conserving Rural Character*. Purchase several copies of the video and provide an area for landowners and developers to view it.
 14. Work with local land trusts to develop, hold, monitor and enforce conservation easements.

Objective: Promote the use of conservation easements⁴ and other mechanisms to acquire and preserve important open space lands, in perpetuity.

Actions:

1. Establish a Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR)⁵ program in the town to protect open space *in perpetuity*, so that agriculture, open space, forestry, scenic viewsheds, gateways, water resources, biodiversity and wildlife habitat lands can be maintained in family farming and forestry, and/or forever preserved (shielded from development).
2. Establish a committee to: identify lands suitable for purchase of development rights (including those recommended in this Plan), to analyze the costs of such a program, and to make recommendations on an appropriate bond referendum to accomplish the program. New York State awards up to 75 percent of the cost of purchasing development rights on farms, and since 1996, the state has awarded nearly \$56 million to protect approximately 22,000 acres of farmland, statewide. In Dutchess County, the Open Space and Farmland Protection Matching Grant Program awards \$1.5 million each year for farmland protection, and Scenic Hudson has contributed \$3.32 million to preserve nine farms, totaling 1,393 acres.
3. Establish a Community Trust Fund using the fund as seed money to achieve the town's open space and affordable housing goals. Investigate the potential use of these, among other mechanisms to endow the fund:
 - a. Open space bond act⁶
 - b. Dedicated sales tax revenues
 - c. A two percent real estate transfer tax
 - d. Dedicated use of budget surpluses for open space
 - e. Dedicated property tax increase

- f. Contributions (Payments in Lieu of Taxes [PILOT]) from tax-exempt entities
 - g. Contribution, per admission ticket, from Dutchess County Fairground event participants⁷
 - h. Other local sources of revenue for acquisition of open space.
4. Secure conservation easements on all working farms in the town over the next five years.
 5. Set priorities for potential natural area preservation, including: large, contiguous parcels of open space; parcels on which property owners are interested in establishing voluntary conservation easements, or utilizing the PDR program; parcels adjacent to existing parcels already preserved; parcels around lakes, ponds, or water bodies; parcels with unique natural resources; parcels that are important for bio-diversity or significant habitats; parcels under development pressure; parcels that have historic and/or archaeological resources or scenic qualities; and parcels that can provide recreational opportunities.
 6. Consider hiring a professional grant writer to pursue funding available from county, state and federal government agencies for open space and recreational land acquisition, such as the County Farmland and Open Space Program, the State Purchase of Development Rights Program, the Federal Farmland Preservation Program, Federal Forest Legacy Program, Federal Wetlands Reserve Program, and Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Investigate all potential available sources of funding, described in the New York State publication entitled *Local Open Space Planning Guide*, including such private sources as the Scenic Hudson Land Trust. Work with local land trusts for information and guidance.
 7. Evaluate the use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), a voluntary means of transferring development rights among two or more property owners, but within the overall density standards of the town's zoning regulations. Require conservation easements on such "donor" parcels, in order to ensure that they will remain open, *in perpetuity*.
 8. Work with local land trusts to find ways for landowners to use limited development techniques, such as reduced densities in residential subdivisions, as an alternative to full build-out.⁸
 9. Adopt a town policy requiring an assessment of the conservation value of all town-owned lands or lands under its control, prior to either its potential development, transfer, lease, exchange or sale as "surplus," and seek advice from the Planning Board and CAC before taking action.

¹ A local right-to-farm law could also promote the importance of agriculture to the town's economy and quality of life, its visual appeal, and the manner in which farming generates social well being in the community.

² At one time, wood provided up to 90 percent of our energy needs. Wood is a form of solar energy; trees are renewable and can provide energy security versus dependence on imported and increasingly scarce fossil fuels.

³ The right of first refusal provides the town with the option to acquire the property on matching terms in any case where a sale for non-farm use is proposed. While the agreement remains in place, the town and the landowner explore preservation options, including purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, fee simple acquisition and conservation subdivision.

⁴ Under New York State Law, conservation easements limit or restrict development, management or use of land for the purpose of preserving or maintaining the scenic, open, historic, archaeological, architectural or natural condition, character, significance or amenities of property.

⁵ A municipality can create a trust fund for the purchase of development rights (PDR) on lands designated for preservation or protection from development by offering incentives to developers to build

in designated growth centers in exchange for cash contributions or by using operating revenues, municipal bond proceeds, and/or county, state and federal program funds for such purposes.

⁶ The Town of Red Hook approved a \$3.5MM bond for agriculture and open space, and other Dutchess County communities are presently considering similar actions. 68 percent of Survey respondents are in favor of a bond issue in Rhinebeck with an additional 18 percent undecided.

⁷ This is a repeated suggestion of Visioning Session participants, as well as a “write-in” suggestion provided by a large percentage of survey respondents.

⁸ Full build-out occurs when all the developable land in the town has been consumed and converted to uses permitted under the current Zoning Law and other regulations.

Historic and Cultural Resources

RHINEBECK'S HISTORY

The Town of Rhinebeck has a rich historical and cultural past spanning over 300 years of European settlement and several thousand years of pre-historic habitation by Native Americans. Much of Rhinebeck's unique legacy is recognized in two large historic districts and many scattered historic sites throughout the town. The town is home to a portion of a National Historic Landmark District, the State Mid-Hudson Historic Shorelands Scenic District, the Estates District Scenic Area of Statewide Significance, State Scenic Byways, and a Coastal Zone area. It is also within the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and the state's Hudson River Valley Greenway.

Today, Rhinebeck's ongoing commitment to planning, natural resource protection and historic preservation, as well as its excellent quality of life, has made it an attractive community for those who seek a place with these attributes. While Rhinebeck's population declined in the 1990's due to the closure of IBM Kingston, between 2000 and 2003, the population of the town (excluding the Village) surged, increasing 6.8 percent – almost double Dutchess County's rate of growth for this same period. This rate of change is significant because Dutchess County is one of the fastest growing counties in New York State.

The Sepasco Indians originally inhabited Rhinebeck's land areas, but in 1686, several Dutch families purchased a large tract for settlement. The area remained predominately Dutch until 1713, when Judge Henry Beekman began to interest German Palatine settlers in utilizing his large land holdings. This community was clustered around the Old Stone Church and Palatine homestead at Wey's Corners. Then, mills were established along the Landsman Kill in the vicinity of the present Crystal Lake, and William Traphagen built a tavern on lands located on the "Flatts." Others began to settle in the same area.

In 1730, Colonel Henry Beekman, the son of the patentee, Judge Henry Beekman, granted to a group of settlers a site of two acres of land on the corner of King's Highway (Route 9) and the Indian Trail (South Street) for the building of the Dutch Reformed Church and cemetery. The building of the church and tavern near the mills provided the nucleus for the present Village of Rhinebeck. The Town of Rhinebeck was officially organized on March 7, 1788, having evolved over time from several smaller settlements, including Kipsbergen in present day Rhinecliff. The village was later incorporated in 1834.

During the Revolutionary War, General Richard Montgomery, then a resident of Rhinebeck, bravely led the patriot forces in an unsuccessful assault on Quebec. He died in the attempt, becoming the first American general to lose his life in the War for Independence. There were

many other local residents who figured prominently in that important period of our country's history.

Throughout its early development, Rhinebeck prospered because of the many mills along the Landsman Kill and the docks along the river. The Albany Post Road, which is now State Route 9, carried stagecoach passengers and mail between New York and Albany. Boats made regularly scheduled trips between the docks in Rhinecliff and New York City. Commerce flourished, and so did the area.

In the mid-nineteenth century, rail lines were laid along the Hudson between New York and Albany. Somewhat later, the Hucklebush Rail Line was laid, which connected Rhinecliff with Connecticut. The railroad greatly enhanced ease of travel to and from the area.

During the late Victorian period, a variety of violet was developed locally, which became popular for use in nosegays and corsages. For several decades greenhouses were found on almost every block in the village and throughout the countryside. Rhinebeck violets were shipped worldwide, and Rhinebeck assumed the title "Violet Capital of the World," but the depression delivered a devastating blow to the violet industry. Only a few growers prevailed until finally, in 1984, the last of the greenhouses ceased violet production. Several greenhouses are now producing anemones, continuing the tradition of Rhinebeck flower growers.

HISTORIC SITES AND SCENIC DISTRICTS

Much of Rhinebeck's unique character is recognized in several districts that are of state and national significance. In 1979, the National Historic Landmark District, which includes portions of the Town of Rhinebeck, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This area also includes the historic shorelands scenic district (as further described in Chapter 10, Scenic Resources) and a town-wide multiple resource district. The Historic Properties maps (Figures 12.1 and 12.2) show the extent of these areas and the location of specific sites on the National Register of Historic Places and local historic sites. Names of the registered site are listed in Appendix 4.

The magnificent homes of the National Historic Landmark District span more than two centuries. They represent the architectural and social history of the times, and served as residences of several successful and powerful New York families. Included in this group of estates is Ferncliff, home of the Astor family.

Farther south at Ellerslie, Levi P. Morton, who was Vice President of the United States under Benjamin Harrison, made his home. During his tenure as Ambassador to France, Mr. Morton formally accepted the gift of the Statue of Liberty from the citizens of France to the citizens of the United States.

The estates assumed additional importance through the role that many of their occupants played in state and national history. However, the special significance of the area is derived from its location along the Hudson River, with views of the Catskill Mountain range adding a dimension that rivals and enhances its historic and architectural significance.

The Rhinebeck Village Historic District, designated in 1980, includes almost 400 buildings, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Beekman Arms, located in the center of the community, claims recognition as the oldest continuously operating hotel in the United States. It preserves the flavor and character of colonial America. Several surveys of the areas adjacent to the established districts are in progress, and are expected to result in further listings on the National Register of Historic Places.

Scattered throughout the town are stone houses and other examples of colonial vernacular architecture, with many unusual and interesting design features. A town-wide Multiple Resource District that includes 37 sites (44 significant structures) has been added to the National Register. Appendix 4 includes the sites within this district.

The first three sites in the town to be listed on the National Register included the Delamater House in the Village, the Old Stone Church Complex on NYS 9, and the Sands Estate at the junction of Route 9G and Route 308. The Delamater House, designed in 1844 by Alexander Jackson Davis in carpenters' gothic manner, is considered a classic example of Gothic Revival architecture. The Old Stone Church, built in 1786, is typical of front-towered church design of the Georgian period. The Robert Sands Estate burned shortly after listing. The most recent National Register listing is that of the Neher-Elsifer-Cotting House.

The town board has designated the Quitman House (the Old Stone Church parsonage), the Neher-Elsifer-Cotting House (Palatine Farmstead) and Wilderstein as local landmarks.

A number of intact historic resources are clustered in Wurtemberg in the southeast corner of Rhinebeck, near the Clinton town line. Four historic properties – the Pultz farmhouse, Marguardt Farmhouse, John H. Traver Farmhouse and St. Paul's Lutheran Church – are located there, along a one-mile stretch of Wurtemberg Road.

Wurtemberg was a farming community of Palatine settlers during the 18th and 19th centuries. The Pultz Farmhouse dates from the early settlement period, and dating from circa 1750 is the oldest extant structure in Wurtemberg. The Marguardt Farm includes a federal-style farmhouse dating to 1810, and a late-1700s Dutch-type barn. The Traver Farmhouse dates to 1876, and has a Baroque Italianate façade. A Dutch barn from the late 18th century is also on the site.

The focal point of the historic buildings in Wurtemberg is St. Paul's Church which was begun in 1802 and remodeled in 1861. A parsonage and burial grounds are grouped with the church.

What follows is a description of the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of protection, based upon the following uniform criteria¹:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and: a) *That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;* or b) *That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;* or c) *That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;* or d) *That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

All future land use decision-making in the town should consider sites that are currently listed, or may be listed in the future, on the National Register of Historic Places, through their identification and preservation as found on Figures 12.1 and 12.2 at the end of this chapter. Some of the National Register sites are listed below. The complete list of all National Register sites together with other important historic sites in the town can be found in Appendix 4.

¹ From the National Park Service National Register of Historic Places website. This information is located on the *Listing the Property – What is the Process* page. Please see <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/listing.htm> for more information.

1. Benner House
2. Rockledge
3. Fredenburg House
4. Traver House
5. Steenburg Tavern
6. Strawberry Hill
7. Progue House
8. Jan Pier House
9. Pultz Farmhouse
10. Marquardt Farmhouse
11. Barringer House
12. Slate Quarry Road Dutch Barn
13. Cox Farmhouse
14. Van Vredenburg Farmhouse
15. Williams Farmhouse
16. Sipperly-Lown Farmhouse
17. J.E. Traver Farmhouse
18. John H. Traver Farmhouse
19. St Paul's Lutheran Church, Parsonage and Cemetery
20. Hillside Methodist chapel
21. J.W. Moore House
22. Riverside Methodist Church & Parsonage
23. Rhinecliff Hotel
24. O'Brien General Store and Post Office
25. Morton Memorial Library
26. Free Church Parsonage
27. Heermance House and Law Office
28. The Maples
29. Grasmere
30. The Grove
31. Mansakenning
32. Evergreen Lands
33. Stonecrest
34. Astor Home for Children
35. Robert Sands Estate
36. Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Peter & parsonage
37. Neher-Elsifer-Losee House
38. Wynclyffe
39. Whispering Pines
40. Linwood

As shown on Figures 12.1 and 12.2 at the end of this chapter, the entire east bank of the Hudson River within the Town of Rhinebeck and beyond, falls within the Hudson River Heritage National Historic Landmark District. The National Park Service describes the District as follows:

This 30-square-mile district on the eastern shore of the Hudson River, midway between New York City and Albany, is composed of several villages and a number of country houses. With its Dutch colonial origins and its remarkably diverse ethnic populations, the region holds a unique position in the settlement and social history of the nation. Sedate Dutch homesteads, rustic German farms, industrious Yankee towns, and Gilded Age mansions all contribute to a rich landscape fabric, remarkable for its integrity and its preservation.

These estate properties, constituting Rhinebeck's portion of the National Landmark Hudson Valley District represent the most concentrated estate area along the entire Hudson River. Their views of the Hudson with the Catskill Mountains to the west were exceptionally desirable and continue to make this area an extremely important asset for Rhinebeck and for New York State. Sensitive handling of the development of this area is crucial to maintain the estate atmosphere that lends so much importance to Rhinebeck's historic aspect.

Vision: All specifically designated historic districts, buildings and features should be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations

Rhinebeck has a rich cultural past spanning over 300 years of European settlement and thousands of years of pre-historic habitation. This legacy is demonstrated in the National Landmark District – one of the largest in the nation – and the multi-resource historic district, as well as scattered sites throughout the town. Residents are not only aware of this rich past, but treasure it; the survey and visioning sessions firmly established residents' desire to protect Rhinebeck's heritage.

Objective: Historic Resources should be protected and new development within historic districts or near historic sites should be consistent with the existing setting of the site, taking into account the history, existing architecture and character of the surrounding area.

Actions:

1. Establish historic district zoning, architectural review procedures and local landmark standards to protect the rich cultural resources of the community.
2. Nominate historic buildings and districts for state and National Register of Historic Places designation. Where historic structures do not qualify for such designation, create criteria to govern local designation.



Historic Delamater House



Architecturally compatible nearby auto showroom

3. Allow adaptive re-use of historic structures to help preserve them by permitting such a range of uses as multi-family housing, bed and breakfasts or tourist guesthouse operations, providing that the re-use is subject to performance standards as part of special use permit requirements (which include protection of the historic structure).
4. Develop a list of all historic properties in the town, to be coordinated by the town historian, including historic properties of national, state and local significance on the list.
5. Establish historic designations for locally recognized structures and their landscape settings, and include the list in The Rhinebeck Plan.
6. Develop standards governing the installation of fences that are compatible with the town's unique natural, scenic and historic character. Promote the use of stonewalls, when feasible.
7. Identify existing architectural elements that have historic value (i.e. stonewalls, wells and culverts) and incorporate them into any proposed site development as assets to be preserved.

8. Charter the town historian with coordinating an archeological resource inventory and preparation of an archeological sensitivity map which identify areas in Rhinebeck to be protected and make it a part of the Plan once completed.
9. Preserve archaeological resources by carefully considering sensitive archaeological zones identified by New York State and local archaeologists during the SEQR reviews of proposed developments. File newly discovered archaeological sites with the State for inclusion in its databases.

Vision: The history and integrity of the hamlet of Rhinecliff should be preserved and its strong civic and cultural life should be maintained.

The hamlet of Rhinecliff has evolved as a small center for civic life, culture and limited commercial activity. For almost two decades, residents have consistently stressed the importance of preserving the role of the village of Rhinebeck as the Town's commercial, financial, governmental and residential center while honoring the historic integrity of Rhinecliff as a hamlet. The essence of the hamlet's civic and cultural life is embodied in the Morton Memorial Library and the firehouse, the post office and the Rhinecliff Train Station. While Rhinecliff has some limited potential for growth, its historic character must always be preserved and protected.

Actions:

1. Develop the zoning provisions specific to Rhinecliff as described in Chapter 5.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

The community facilities and services available to residents are important factors in quality of life. As development occurs, the strain on existing schools, libraries, parks, emergency services, and local government functions increases and often need to be expanded for new residents and businesses. This section provides an overview of the services and facilities available to town residents.

RECREATION

Recreation facilities are generally defined as areas set aside for active, organized pursuits, such as field sports, walking and hiking trails, and passive recreational activities such as picnicking, bird watching and nature or scenic appreciation. These activities occur in public facilities and in open space areas, including linear parks like trails, set aside for these activities.

Three popular public recreation areas used by town residents are the Rhinebeck Community Park, Rhinecliff Town Landing, and Rhinecliff Fireman's Field. The town also owns the Stone Church baseball and soccer fields, located across from the Town Recycling Center. Some of these lands are located in the town of Red Hook. The town also owns significant undeveloped acreage in this area both in Rhinebeck and Red Hook. In addition to these recreational facilities, town residents use the school grounds and two small parks located in the village, the American Legion Park on Mill Street and the Lion's Mini-Park on South Parsonage Street.

The Thomas Thompson & Sally Mazzarella Community Park is an 81-acre, multi-use facility on Rhinecliff Road, located to the east of and behind the Starr Library. The facility includes a swimming pool, wading pool and bathhouse, a lighted basketball court, lighted tennis courts, a baseball field, sand volleyball court, two shuffleboard courts and a playground. Food service is provided, as are picnic pavilions. In 2002, the town and village jointly purchased 70 of the 81 acres, which will be developed as an extension of Rhinebeck's multi-use recreation facility, including the addition of ball fields, playgrounds and a Greenway Trail leading from the village to the Hudson River. A committee was formed to oversee the site's re-development, and is in the process of working with a team of consultants to develop and execute a "Master Plan" for Thompson-Mazzarella Park.

The Rhinebeck Town Landing is a waterfront park that offers the town's only public access to the Hudson River. This site is approximately three-quarters of an acre in size, and provides a

parking area, a boat ramp, a picnic area and a temporary floating dock for small to medium-sized boats. The Landing was improved in the summer of 2004, with a bigger boat launch and a facility for launching kayaks and canoes.

Rhinecliff Fireman's Field, located on Orchard Street in Rhinecliff, is a small community park with a baseball field. The Rhinecliff Fire Company leases part of a three-acre site to the town, and the town leases an adjacent lot containing a basketball court and playground equipment. In addition, a small Rhinecliff community park at the corner of Shatzel Street and Charles Street comprises parking and benches.

Stone Church Ballfields comprise two softball fields and a soccer field. The remaining town lands are undeveloped, but a trail maintained by the Landsman Kill Trail Association crosses through these lands in several areas, the Town Highway Department maintains a storage facility there, and a depilated, but historic barn is found at the intersection of Stone Church and Yantz roads.

The school grounds have playing fields, a track, and outdoor basketball courts, and improvements to the Middle and High School recreation facilities are currently underway as part of a school expansion project.

In addition to these public access recreation areas, there are several private recreation uses within the town. Some of these areas include: Camp Ramapo on the southeast side of Sepasco Lake, Neighbors Gun Club off of Burger Road, Northern Dutchess Rod and Gun Club near Enterprise Road, and Sepasco recreation area on the west side of Sepasco Lake in the northeastern part of the town. Since these sites are privately owned, their uses could change in the future. The town should not, therefore, rely on private sites to provide the recreation facilities it needs. As the town grows in population, every new resident will place greater demands on town facilities, Rhinebeck must continually examine the need for adding land and facilities to accommodate the increase. School-age children place a particularly high demand on the town's existing recreational facilities. When considering the cumulative demands of all approved, pending and anticipated future subdivision applications on town recreational facilities, there will be a continuing need to expand facilities as a result of subdivision development.

Town residents also have access to large privately owned open spaces within relatively short distances. The closest area is the Ferncliff Forest, located between River Road and Mount Rutsen Road in the northwest part of the town. Ferncliff Forest is a semi-public recreation area donated to the Rhinebeck Rotary Club by Mrs. Astor and is managed by the Ferncliff Forest Corporation. There are no active recreational facilities on this 196-acre forest and game preserve. Its purpose is for less structured forms of recreation, such as enjoyment of nature through hiking and camping. Other nearby large open spaces are Burger Hill Park (owned by the Winnakee Land Trust) on Route 9G in Rhinebeck, and Poets Walk Park (owned by Scenic Hudson) on River Road in Red Hook. These sites provide trails and passive recreational opportunities.

Large public open space includes Ogden Mills Memorial State Park and Norrie State Park, both less than three miles south of the town of Rhinebeck and Hyde Park. These areas provide both passive and active forms of recreation.

As the town grows, demands on its existing recreational facilities will increase. The town must keep abreast of these demands by properly assessing the needs for recreational lands and facilities during SEQR reviews of all proposed subdivisions.

LIBRARIES

Starr Library and Morton Memorial Library are the town's two associated libraries. Starr Library is the main library within Rhinebeck, and serves both village and town residents. Founded in 1862, the Starr Library is now housed in a building constructed in 1975 and expanded in 2005 – 2006, at 68 West Market Street. The library, serving the community of 7,700 in 2005 with 63,000 visits, is on the upper floor of this two-story brick structure. It comprises 10,733 square feet, and houses some 28,000 volumes (with capacity for 60,000), in two rooms (the new wing serving as the main library reading room, and the older library wing serving as the -children's wing. The library offers books, DVDs and CDs, Internet access to the public, and educational programs. In addition, two rooms are available on a lower floor for community use. Morton Memorial Library and Community House is another public library in the town, serving the residents in the vicinity of Rhinecliff, as well as Rhinebeck at large. The historic brick structure, located on Kelly Street in Rhinecliff, was constructed in 1905 and incorporated in 1908, and is listed in both the National and State Registers of Historic Places. Its five rooms on two levels house over 9,000 items, including books, DVDs, CDs and videos, and periodicals. The building comprises a main reading room, three childrens' sections and Morton Hall (the community meeting room/auditorium).

Both libraries are members of the Mid-Hudson Library System, an affiliation that provides residents with additional services and a larger resource base. The two libraries work together on a number of collaborative efforts to serve the community

FIRE PROTECTION AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

Fire protection services in Rhinebeck are provided by volunteers in three fire districts: the Rhinebeck Fire District, the Rhinecliff Fire District and the Hillside Fire District. The town contracts with the local fire stations to provide continuous coverage for the town within the districts.

The Rhinebeck Fire Department was founded July 7, 1834, and was originally comprised of two separate companies which merged in 1963. In 1970, the Rhinebeck Fire Department expanded to include the Rhinebeck Rescue Squad. The Rhinebeck Fire District serves Rhinebeck village and the northeastern half of the town. It has an eight-bay firehouse built in 1973, located at 76 East Market Street across from the Town Hall and within Village Hall. The district has two class "A" pumpers, a 110-foot aerial truck, a rescue pumper equipped with the "Jaws of Life" and air bags for lifting heavy objects, and an ambulance that is certified "Basic Life Support," and carries a defibrillator.

The Rhinecliff Fire District serves most of the northwestern and western quarter of the town. The three-bay brick firehouse dating to the 1920s, is located on the corner of Shatzel and Orchard streets. It has two pumpers, one mini pumper and an ambulance.

The Hillside Fire District serves the southern quarter of the town. The three-story firehouse has three bays and is located on Fox Hollow Road near the intersection with Route 9. It was built in the 1920s. The district has one pumper, one tanker and one rescue truck. Over 200 volunteers staff the three fire districts.

The build-out analysis conducted as part of The Rhinebeck Plan indicates the need for approximately 10 new fire fighters should additional development following existing zoning be realized.

P O L I C E

The village has a part-time police department that provides contract services to the town. The Police Department is currently housed at the Fairgrounds property but may move to a more centralized location if one becomes available. The town also contracts with the County Sheriff's Department to conduct police patrols of town facilities and recreation areas. Dutchess County Sheriff's Department and the State Police provide additional police protection for the town. The county has a substation on Route 308 near Sepasco Lake, and the State Police maintain a barracks on Route 9 south of the village.

The build-out analysis conducted as part of The Rhinebeck Plan indicates the need for approximately 10 new police officers should additional development following existing zoning be realized.

M E D I C A L S E R V I C E S

Central to medical services in Rhinebeck is Northern Dutchess Hospital, a voluntary, non-profit institution located on Route 9 on the corner of Montgomery Street, Northern Dutchess Hospital is part of the Health Quest health care system, which includes Vassar Brothers Medical Center, Putnam Hospital and other affiliates. The hospital has 68 beds, and is currently undergoing expansion to provide a new Emergency Room, to enlarge and modernize all the patient rooms and to enlarge and modernize the operating room suites.

Northern Dutchess Hospital is a full-service hospital offering primary care, general and specialized surgery (including breast surgery), orthopedic surgery, and ear-nose-and throat surgery. In addition to a broad range of medical and surgical services, the hospital provides emergency services, comprehensive out-patient services, and physical and occupational therapy. Also located at the hospital are the Neugarten Family Birthing Center, which was the first hospital-based birthing center in New York State when it opened in 1985, the Center for Wellness and Rehabilitation and the Paul Rosenthal Rehabcare Center. The Thompson House, a 100-bed skilled nursing facility affiliated with the Northern Dutchess Hospital, offers sub-acute rehabilitation and long-term care. The hospital's current staff totals 116 practitioners offering health care services in approximately 30 specialty areas.

On hospital property at 14 Springbrook Avenue is the Dutchess County Mental Health Clinic, one of the clinics of the Dutchess County Department of Mental Hygiene. The clinic provides out-patient mental health services that include intake and assessment counseling and follow-up work. Also on hospital grounds is the newly opened Women's View, which offers pelvic floor rehabilitation, nutritional counseling, acupuncture and educational lecture series to the public. At the corner of 47 West Market and Oak Street is another facility of the Department of Mental Hygiene, the Rhinebeck Continuing Treatment Center, which offers psychiatric mental health treatment to chronically mentally ill residents of the northern Dutchess area.

The Town of Rhinebeck is served by the Rhinebeck Rescue Squad, which is supported by the Northern Dutchess Paramedics, a commercial ambulance service that provides advanced life support.

In addition to the Thompson House, Ferncliff Nursing Home is a skilled nursing facility with 328 beds. Another such facility, The Baptist Home, has 120 beds. Arbor Hill, currently under construction on Route 308, will have between 80 and 100 dwelling units for seniors.

TOWN GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

The Town Hall is located in the Village on the southeast corner of East Market Street and Center Street. The structure provides approximately 5,500 square feet of space for town activities. It contains offices, an auditorium, and meeting rooms. All town functions, except the Highway Department, occupy offices within this one-story brick building. The hall was built in 1939 and remains in good condition. The hall currently has inadequate office space for staff but sufficient meeting rooms for the public. The lack of office space should be addressed in a way that respects the historic character of the structure. The Town Hall's central location encourages access to Town government offices and helps reinforce the Village as the community center.

Town highway facilities are located on the north side of Rhinecliff Road about one-quarter mile west of the Village. The highway garage, offices, equipment, storage buildings, and a salt shed are located at this 3.8 acre site. The two main Town highway buildings on the site include: the 6,000 square foot, seven bay, town garage (which also houses the department offices) and a newer 4,000 square foot, four bay building built in 1985. The garage contains facilities for repairing the town's extensive road building and maintenance equipment as well as the equipment needed to maintain the town's park facilities. A secondary storage facility is located on Stone Church Road near the transfer station. As the town grows and the demand for services grow, the need for a capital improvements plan becomes greater.

SCHOOLS

Most of the Town falls within the Rhinebeck Central School District. Small portions of the Town are in the Hyde Park Central School District and the Red Hook Central School District. Each of these districts provides a full range of elementary and secondary education.

The Rhinebeck Central School District was organized in 1924 as a merger of a number of smaller school districts. The district covers an area of over 70 square miles in parts of three towns in Dutchess County. All of the Rhinebeck Central School District facilities are located within the Village of Rhinebeck. Currently, the school system is organized into three different levels of grades located in two school facilities. The Chancellor Livingston Elementary School (K to grade 5) was built in 1967 in the southeast corner of the Village. It has a current enrollment of 529 students¹. The Bulkley Middle School (grades 6 to 8) is now located on the second floor of the Rhinebeck High School/Bulkley Middle School building, constructed in 1950-1952, on North Park Road but expanded to accommodate the Middle School in 1996. Current enrollment is 307 students. Current enrollment at the Rhinebeck High School (grades 9 to 12) is 409 students.

Total enrollment in the Rhinebeck Central School District is currently 1,245 students. Enrollment has remained relatively stable, with slight increases and declines over the years. In 1987, for instance, total enrollment in the district was 1,200 students, as cited in the 1989 *Comprehensive Plan*. The total capacity of the three Rhinebeck School buildings is approximately 1,500.

In 2003, voters approved a \$23 million bond referendum for a new auditorium, gymnasium and sports fields, and to update existing facilities. The town and School District should improve

¹ Enrollment figures are as of October 6, 2004.

communications and collaborative efforts should be initiated for use of the Thompson-Mazzarella Park.

SOLID WASTES

The town's landfill on Stone Church Road has been capped and is being monitored. Solid wastes generated by residents are now disposed of for a fee at the Town's Recycling Transfer Station adjacent to the old landfill. Private carters also serve residents and businesses. Minimally sorted recyclables are trucked to the Dutchess County Materials Recovery Facility in the City of Poughkeepsie and non-recyclable wastes are transferred to the Poughkeepsie burn plant on Sand Dock Road in the Town of Poughkeepsie.

SUMMARY

In addition to preparing a plan that identifies suitable uses for the Thompson-Mazzarella Park Recreation Park, emphasis should be placed on developing a multi-use trail system in the Town to serve recreational and transportation needs. The potential development of the former Hucklebush rail trail, and the feasibility of a trail on the Town owned lands in the vicinity Stone Church, Yantz and Pells Road should be given priority. Off-street walking and bicycle paths should also be created as opportunities arise to link neighborhoods to each other, to the hamlet of Rhinecliff, the Village, and surrounding towns. The Town should also prepare a recreation plan to assess whether additional recreational lands and facilities will be needed to serve future population growth in accordance with the Town's build-out. Access to the Hudson River, a major recreational resource, should be improved. Areas for small pocket parks throughout the Town should be identified, particularly where these areas can be used in conjunction with trail development.

The difficulty in recruiting volunteer emergency personnel is of growing concern to the volunteer ambulance and fire protection services on which Rhinebeck's residents depend. The Town should continue to recognize the value of volunteerism in the community and take proactive steps to encourage citizens to volunteer so that paid professionals will not be needed to staff these positions.

There are no evident shortfalls in medical services. The numerous physicians and clinics in Rhinebeck and the diverse services provided by the Northern Dutchess Hospital serve much of northern Dutchess County.

The improvements to the Rhinebeck Central School District and the expansion of the Starr Library will meet the needs of Town residents for the foreseeable future.

Vision: Continually explore opportunities for inter-municipal cooperation with Rhinebeck village for such community services as police, fire, roads, sewage disposal, refuse and water supply

Many opportunities exist for more efficient, effective service provision to town and village residents, such as: the merging of highway services; a jointly managed vehicle maintenance shop; the joint use of such buildings as an equipment sheds or highway garage; a single, rather than dual government appointees in such positions as clerk, for example.

Objective: Inter-municipal agreements with the village should be prepared and executed to make community service delivery more efficient and effective.

Actions:

1. Foster opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between town and village police, fire, highway and waste management services, so as to make all services more cost-effective and efficient.
2. Appoint an *ad hoc* committee to study the benefits of merging town and village services, including police, fire, highway and waste management. Address the current shortage of office space at Town Hall when examining the service needs of the community. Any examination needs to be sensitive to the architectural importance of the structure.
3. Monitor and work with the village to improve environmental conditions and impacts to neighbors of the Village Highway Department site located in the town on State Route 308 at County Route 101 (Violet Hill Road).
4. Work toward an agreement with the village to address expansion of water supplies and sewer service limited to areas of the town in the areas adjacent to the Village envisioned for medium-density housing, as well as for the Village Gateway (R-6000) zoning districts. Ensure that there is a clear understanding among all parties that such services must not serve as a growth inducement for sprawl outside of the designated growth areas.
5. Establish a means for developers, neighbors, environmental groups and other stakeholders (such as the village) to conceptualize and shape development projects before significant engineering is accomplished. Use collaboration as a tool to enhance neighborhoods. Incorporate, into Planning Board procedures, a process, such as the “*Smart Land Development System*,” as an alternative to “sketch plan review.”
6. Amend the subdivision regulations to require use of dry hydrants and impoundments in subdivisions, where feasible, for fire fighting purposes.
7. Continue to work with the village and Dutchess County to ensure coordination of services and response for disasters and other local emergencies.

Objective: Encourage waste reduction and recycling of waste materials.

Actions:

1. Maintain and improve recycling efforts in the town, and encourage the village to do so, as well.
2. Promote recycling by publicizing Internet-based sites for swapping items that are still usable, but unwanted by their owners.
3. Support the Dutchess County Resource Recovery *Household Waste Pick-up Days* program and educate and urge Rhinebeck residents to properly dispose of their household hazardous waste.

Vision: Work cooperatively to ensure that schools, libraries and other educational and cultural facilities and organizations are supported at the highest levels

Education and the fine and performing arts are among those things that help to ensure a happy, fulfilled life. The institutions associated with them can dramatically improve the quality of our lives by helping to provide what we learn and how we learn it; our cultural leisure; the activities that inspire us, educate us and enrich us. Rhinebeck’s continually expanding educational and cultural facilities make the town highly regarded for its quality of education and provision of pleasurable pastime.

Objective: Potential impacts of all types of development on school capacity and taxes should be addressed.

Actions:

1. Create a School and Land Use Committee to find ways for the town, village and School District to coordinate their policies and decisions.
2. Designate the School District as an Interested Agency in all applications for development that would generate additional school children, so the Planning Board and the School District can work together to address potential impacts on schools.
3. Use SEQR to identify and address school capacity issues, and require that new, large-scale development proposals be subject to a fiscal impact analysis.
4. Encourage a variety of housing choices for people in all stages of life
5. Establish criteria and amend the Zoning Law to ensure that new development meets specific criteria that demonstrate a positive, overall impact on public revenues, the local economy and existing businesses.

Vision: Rhinebeck should be maintained and enhanced as a center for increasingly diverse and wide-ranging recreational, civic and cultural activities.

A certain amount of change in the community is inevitable. To maintain quality of life as growth occurs, it is essential that sufficient recreational, civic and cultural activities are available to meet residents' needs. The town should do all it can to provide for leisure time activities that can be shared by all citizens and age groups in the community.

Objective: Plans should be developed for recreational facilities adequate to serve the town's current and future populations.

Actions:

1. Approve and implement a master plan for the Thompson-Mazzarella Park which addresses the needs of residents of all ages, and which includes active and passive recreational uses, environmental and educational programs and a broad range of opportunities for social connection.
2. Analyze existing recreational facilities, goals established in The Rhinebeck Plan, and project the demand for additional recreational lands and facilities to serve future population growth generated by subdivision development in accordance with the town's build-out. Determine the cost of providing such facilities and increase the town's current recreation fees so that future needs are met.
3. Work with private landowners and Winnakee Land Trust and like-minded groups to secure public access to major water bodies, especially the Hudson River, at all locations where access is feasible and desirable.
4. Encourage the Town Board and the Planning Board to work closely together and with not-for-profit conservation organizations on the acquisition of additional lands for recreational purposes in new subdivision developments. Where at all possible, acquire lands for recreational purposes under the mandatory land dedication requirements of New York State Town Law and the Town Zoning Law.¹
5. Acquire land for public use well in advance of need.
6. Consider developing a plan for construction of a community center at Thompson Mazzarella Park – the center to be created for use by people of all ages in all seasons, and for inter-generational, civic and cultural activities.
7. Encourage the development of a long-range capital improvement program to maintain and upgrade recreational and other community facilities.

8. Consider The Rhinebeck Plan in the planning and design of all capital construction projects, whether owned and operated by the town, county or state.
9. Hold all new public construction projects and re-development of existing projects and facilities (including roads in the town), to the same standards of design as are private development projects including lighting, signage and other aesthetic matters.

Objective: Cultural facilities and programs to serve the needs of the community should be developed.

Actions:

1. Appoint a Cultural Liaison Committee whose purpose will be to encourage fine and performing arts organizations to hold their events in Rhinebeck. Events might include film festivals, crafts events, art fairs, performance events and other special celebrations.
2. Support the programs and needs of existing cultural facilities to ensure their continuing success by assisting with funding from public and private, as well as county, state and federal sources – facilities to include:
 - a. The Rhinebeck Performing Arts Center
 - b. The Starr Library
 - c. The Levi P. Morton Memorial Library
 - d. Upstate Films
 - e. The Cocoon Theatre
 - f. The Rhinebeck Chamber Music Society
3. Support and expand the programs of Camp Ramapo through educational program coordination with local schools; through the promotion of on-campus social and cultural activities and other collaborative initiatives.
4. Ensure that valued facilities such as Southlands, Linwood Spiritual Center and the Fairgrounds are utilized for civic and cultural events, and that the programs of these organizations are promoted and supported, town-wide
5. Promote opportunities for social activities and interaction in the physical design of existing and new community facilities.
6. Identify opportunities to communicate with residents on topics of town-wide interest. Utilize media that may include: newsletters, the town Web site, tax bills and/or other mass mailings, fliers and newspaper inserts.

Vision: Recognize the value of volunteerism in the community and encourage our citizens to take an active role in the future of Rhinebeck

We live in a society with a diversity of cultural values. We are fortunate to live in a community with people rich in talent and adept of expertise and skills. The solidarity that stems from the act of volunteerism – of working for the common good – helps to bind us together and enables us to respect our differences. We should do all we can to nurture this concept and pass it down to our children.

Objective: Engage increasing numbers of Rhinebeck residents in volunteer activities geared toward the betterment of the town.

Actions:

1. Utilize the soon-expanding Recreation Park to hold town-wide events which, for a nominal entry fee, support a local cultural or charitable organization or the Park, itself; make certain that the event comprises sign-up tables for volunteer workers.
2. Urge the Town Board to develop a program of municipal volunteerism, in which residents are urged to participate on a range of committees formed in support of such town needs as:

emergency planning/services; economic development; farm/agriculture assistance; open space preservation; trails design and maintenance; recreation; service to the elderly; and welcome neighbor programs.

3. Appoint a Committee on Volunteerism, whose purpose it will be to assist in the recruitment of volunteers, and the pairing of them with local organizations in need of volunteer assistance.
4. Examine the potential for adaptive re-use of the town-owned historic barn at the intersection of Stone Church and Yantz Roads. Identify funding to restore the barn structure.
5. Recruit volunteers to plan and construct additional, multi-use (non-motorized) trails on the town-owned lands on Stone Church and Pells roads.

Objective: Support the efforts of the town's all-volunteer fire and emergency services.

Actions:

1. Consider incentives (stipends) for town residents who volunteer for fire and emergency medical services as an alternative to the use of paid professionals.
2. Promote and assist in the recruitment efforts for volunteer fire and EMS workers.

Objective: Support and reward community volunteers.

Actions:

1. Recognize and applaud the significant volunteer commitment of all town-appointed board members, including Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation and Recreation Committees that significantly contribute to the quality of life that Rhinebeck residents enjoy.
2. Develop a well-publicized, town-wide program for rewarding special service, including awards presented ceremoniously for a broad range of volunteer activities – i.e., fire department, EMS, hospital, land stewardship, elder care, youth care and citizenship.
3. Consider holding a town-wide, outdoor event that focuses on volunteerism, rewards volunteers and signs-on new ones in all categories.
4. Reward volunteers by publicizing their achievements on the town Web site and in local newspapers.



Objective: Honor the historic integrity of Rhinecliff as a hamlet.

Actions:

1. Maintain and support the Levi P. Morton Memorial Library as the center for cultural, educational and social life in Rhinecliff.
2. Ensure that the U.S. Post Office at Rhinecliff is maintained as an important community service and place for interaction between Rhinecliff neighbors.
3. Improve the Rhinebeck Town Landing, the sole public access to the Hudson River. Include provision of parking alternatives, so as avoid aggravating parking problems in the hamlet.
4. Investigate opportunities for educational and recreational use of the entire Rhinecliff waterfront, including Long Dock and Slate Dock Roads and the existing Town Landing in order to create and promote the best use of the waterfront.
5. Promote opportunities for continued recreational activities at the site of the former schoolhouse on Orchard Street.
6. Foster opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between the Rhinecliff Fire Department and the Rhinebeck and Hillside departments to ensure the viability and effectiveness of Rhinecliff's Fire Department, given its critical importance to the safety of hamlet residents.



Recently improved Town Landing

INFRASTRUCTURE

Vision: Elements of infrastructure such as water, sewers and roads should be built and maintained to be consistent with community ideals and values, as expressed in The Rhinebeck Plan.

Investment in water and sewer, roads, and other infrastructure has the potential to impact local growth either positively or negatively by influencing the location, cost and extent of new construction. The thoughtful and careful design of infrastructure can help achieve well-organized, environmentally sound development in the town, based on the wishes and needs of the community. New infrastructure must be designed to enhance the community, and must be planned in accordance with The Rhinebeck Plan.

Objective: Minimize negative impacts of new and existing infrastructure on the town's environment.²

Actions:

1. Restrict the creation of new community water and sewer systems except in locations or under conditions designated in The Rhinebeck Plan for such services.
2. Work with the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority to amend their plan to create a water supply service area along Route 9 in the town³ and avoid other areas in Town where lower density development is envisioned.

Objective: Sewer systems should meet community needs to the greatest degree possible; discourage the planning and execution of sewer systems, which, by virtue of location and size, would foster sprawl.

Actions:

1. It is neither necessary nor desirable to create new sewage treatment plants to serve any areas of the Town other than the proposed Neighborhood Districts as discussed in Chapter 4. Sewage treatment systems must be designed to limit capacity (except as described in action # 3 below) to serve the intended neighborhoods alone. Where possible the Village sewer system should be extended to serve these areas.
2. Amend the Zoning Law to require community septic disposal systems⁴ in new open space developments, subject to formation of a sewer district with management controlled by a responsible public entity.
3. Instruct residents about Best Management Practices for septic maintenance and pump-outs to help prevent malfunctions that could contaminate water resources or create other public health hazards.
4. Carefully examine proposed new residential dwellings to be served by a septic disposal system that is to be used only part-time, due to the fact that the bacteria that make the systems work properly can die in the winter if not “fed” regularly, thus possibly malfunctioning.

Objective: An energy plan for all town facilities should be prepared and adopted.

Actions:

1. Adopt a resolution in support of becoming an “Energy Smart Community” and encourage the Village to do the same.
2. Arrange to have the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) conduct energy audits on town buildings. The low fee (\$200 per building) is reimbursable if any recommendations are followed.
3. Consider amendments to the Town Code to require all new residential and non-residential buildings to be built to the US EPA’s Energy Star Standards.
4. Investigate and consider the use of innovative methods (including taxes, preferential reviews, performance based greening, LEED Certification and energy mitigation fees) for encouraging energy conservation and discouraging wasteful energy consumption.
5. Establish a committee to study and report on energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.

Objective: Stormwater regulations, processes, and devices should be managed in accordance with state of the art techniques.

Actions:

1. Establish stormwater management districts as a condition of subdivision or site plan approval for newly developed areas, in order to ensure that the facilities required for Phase Two stormwater management are properly maintained. Offer owners and associations of new commercial developments the option of town maintenance and upgrade of stormwater devices, *in perpetuity*, provided that the town is compensated for the service and/or that the devices are conveyed to the town.
2. Ensure that stormwater management basins are always regarded as an aesthetic and environmental asset to the community, as opposed to just a necessity.



A stormwater management pond is hidden behind dwellings and landscaped to appear as if it is part of the natural setting.

3. Continue to maintain and improve town-owned stormwater devices as needed. Develop a schedule for regular maintenance.
4. Establish performance standards that encourage on-site recharge and water quality protection of stormwater, such as: mandate more strict building and impervious coverage limits; allow driveways, sidewalks and portions of parking lots to have pervious surfaces (such as pavers, instead of cement or asphalt); reduce road width requirements in the Highway Specifications, and consider reduction of existing road widths (where they are excessive for the intended number of vehicles using them); eliminate curbing requirements for new streets in rural areas; increase landscaping requirements for parking lots; explore additional creative stormwater devices through the *New York State Guidelines for Reducing Stormwater Impacts*, as well as through books, on-line information and model ordinances from the Center for Watershed Protection.
5. Enact town erosion and sediment control regulations based on New York State guidelines.

Stormwater management should be viewed as an asset, not just a necessity.

Instruct residents about how to reduce stormwater runoff and maintain stormwater devices as part of overall educational efforts in natural resource protection.

¹ Smaller parks throughout the town may require more intensive management but ultimately reduce traffic generation and put parks where they are needed — close to homes.

² Also refer to “Community Character” Section/pages 1.12-1.15 addressing recommendations particular to the hamlet of Rhinecliff, including parking and traffic, among others.

³ The County’s proposed district is designed to serve a broad area west of Route 9 and 9G to the hamlet of Rhinecliff.

⁴ A community septic disposal system works in much the same way that an individual septic disposal system does. Each dwelling has its own septic tank by the effluent lines run to a common leach field. Such systems must be maintained by a responsible public entity; usually either a town district or the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority. The primary maintenance obligation is for a contractor to pump each tank on a regular basis. Capital, operation and maintenance costs are less than traditional central wastewater treatment plants.